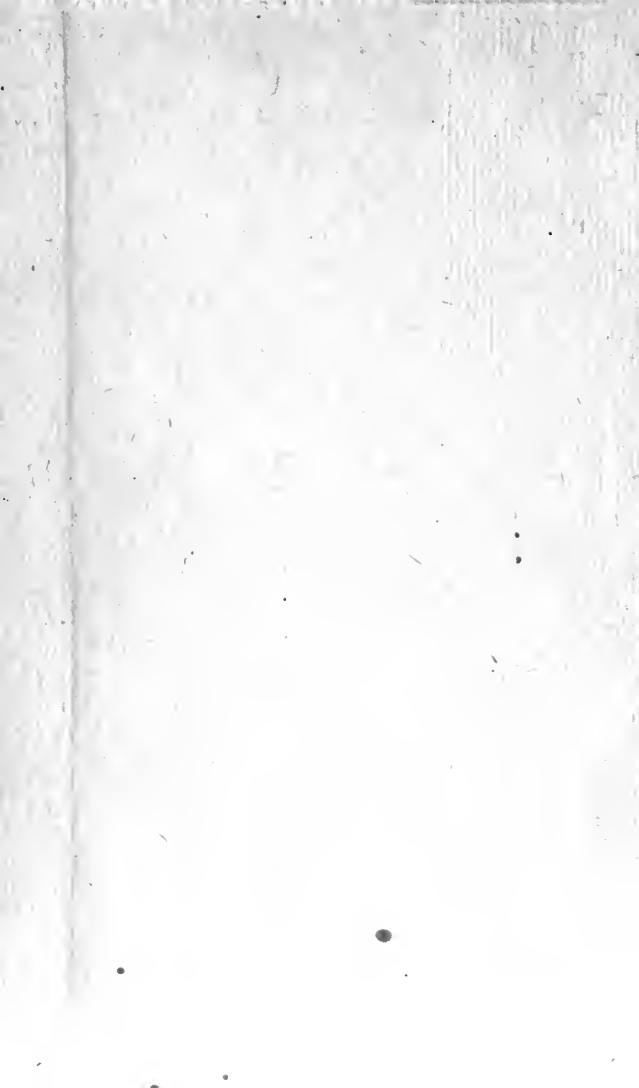
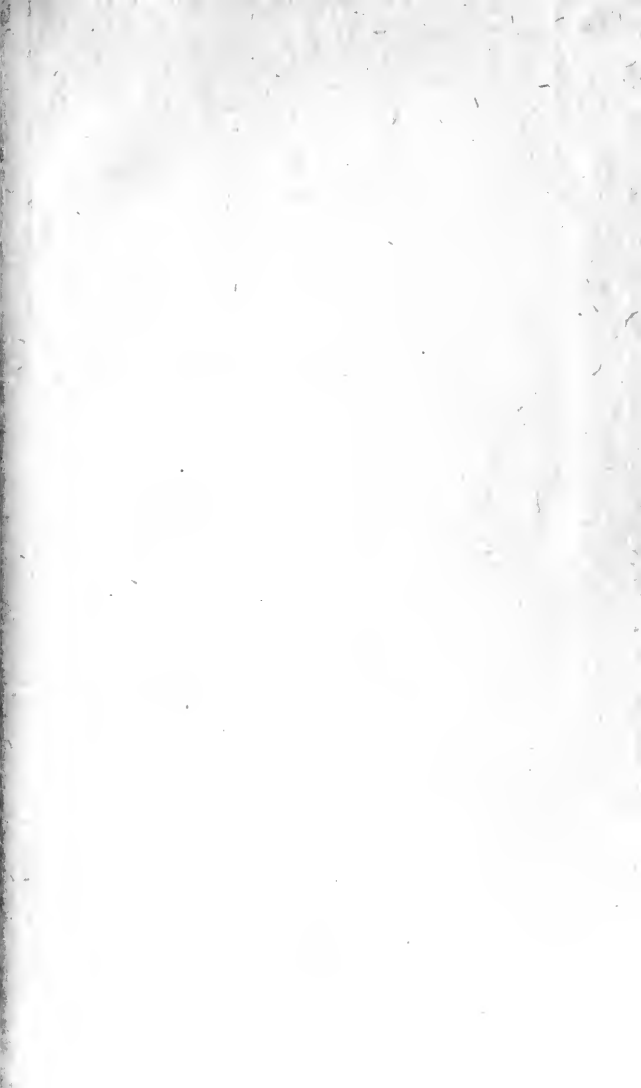


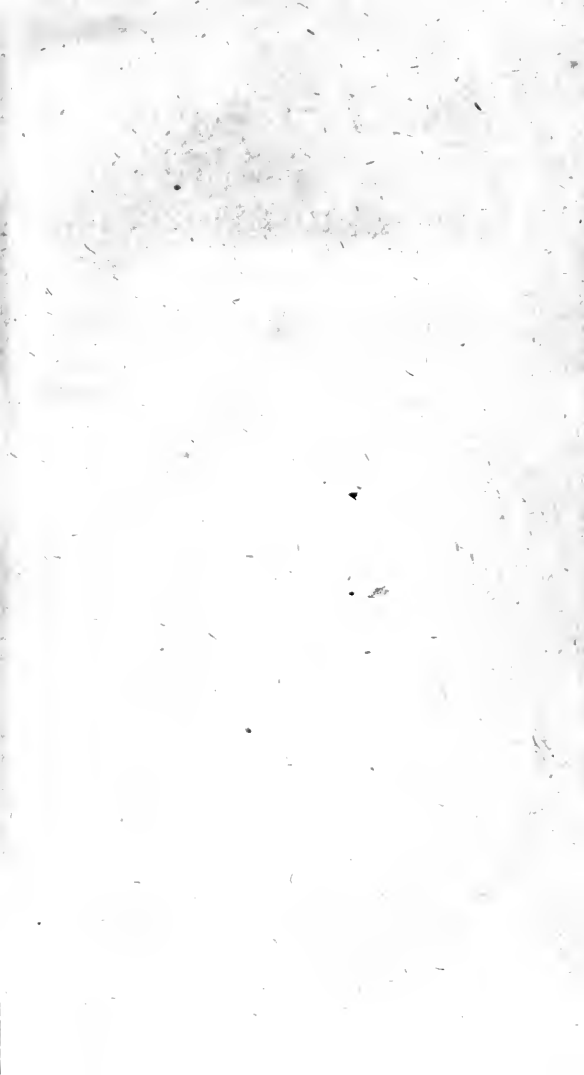


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THE

MODERN THEATRE;

A COLLECTION OF

SUCCESSFUL MODERN PLAYS,

AS ACTED AT

THE THEATRES ROYAL, LONDON.

PRINTED FROM THE PROMPT BOOKS UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS.

SELECTED BY

MRS INCHBALD.

IN TEN VOLUMES.

VOL. IX.

BANK NOTE.

ENGLISH MERCHANT.

CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS. SCHOOL FOR WIVES.

HENRY THE SECOND.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
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EDINBURGH

Printed by James Ballantyne & Co.

THE
BANK NOTE;
OR
LESSONS FOR LADIES.

A COMEDY,
IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

BY
WILLIAM MACREADY

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SIR CHARLES LESLIE,	<i>Mr Holman.</i>
MR BLOOMFIELD,	<i>Mr Middleton.</i>
FATHER,	<i>Mr Hull.</i>
LIEUTENANT SELBY,	<i>Mr Macready.</i>
NED DASH,	<i>Mr Fawcett.</i>
MR HALE,	<i>Mr Quick.</i>
KILLEAVY,	<i>Mr Johnstone.</i>
TIM (<i>Servant to Dash</i>),	<i>Mr Townsend.</i>
CAREFUL (<i>a Steward</i>),	<i>Mr Powell.</i>
YOUNG BLOOMFIELD,	<i>Miss Standen.</i>
MR BLOOMFIELD'S <i>Servant,</i>	<i>Mr Abbot.</i>
<i>Porter,</i>	<i>Mr Coombs.</i>
<i>Gentleman,</i>	<i>Mr Platt.</i>
<i>Cook,</i>	<i>Mr Ledger.</i>
<i>Butler,</i>	<i>Mr Williamson.</i>
LADY SUPPLE,	<i>Mrs Davenport.</i>
MRS BLOOMFIELD,	<i>Mrs Mattocks.</i>
MISS RUSSEL,	<i>Miss Wallis.</i>
MISS EMMA HALE,	<i>Miss Hopkins.</i>
SALLY FLOUNCE,	<i>Mrs Lee.</i>
<i>Maid,</i>	<i>Mrs Norton.</i>
<i>Gentlewoman,</i>	<i>Mrs Follett.</i>

Visitors,—Gentlemen, Ladies, &c. &c.

THE
BANK NOTE.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

The Park.

Enter MR BLOOMFIELD and Servant.

Bloom. Well, I am coming; there's no occasion for all this bustle.

Serv. Lord, sir, he's gone, I'm afraid.

Bloom. No, that he is not, if you left him with Emma—a lover and his mistress are not so easily separated—I knew I was right—here they come.

Enter SELBY and EMMA.

So, Selby, the hour's arrived.

[*Exit Servant.*]

Sel. It is ; that hour which calls me from friends, from home, from my love.

Em. Oh ! heavens ! must you, will you leave me ?

Bloom. Will he ? most assuredly, therefore think not of his going, but console yourself with the pleasing hope of his return.

Em. Ah, sir, 'tis easier far to counsel than to act, and every one's provided with wisdom that has not a share in the misfortune.

Sel. What ! could my Emma wish me to stay, and be branded with dishonour ?

Bloom. Not she, indeed, she'd sooner lose you for ever than think you a coward.

Em. Woman as I am, the thought is hateful ; yet, my Selby, preserve yourself ; let not impetuous zeal drive you into danger ; do not seek wounds ; for any drop of blood you lose flows from your Emma's heart.

Sel. Fear not, my love, I'll——

Bloom. Selby, take heed, my friendship cannot suffer you to incur censure ; you should be gone—a greater power than love commands.

Sel. True ; I feel the reproach——

Em. One moment stop, and hear my resolution in the presence of our mutual friend ; I voluntarily and solemnly pledge myself to exclude all society till your return ; nor do I blush to own my heart is, and shall continue yours.

Sel. Bewitching goodness !—Farewell—Should our arms prove successful, with what joy shall I return to Emma and my native place ; or, should I fall, my last breath shall cry to Heaven for blessings on my Emma, and victory to my sovereign. [Exit.

Em. Oh ! heavens ! my poor heart.

Bloom. What ! is this your boasted resolution ? These tears disgrace the noble love you bear him.

Em. They do, I own it—my Selby, I shall pray for your return with the same fervency as departing

sinner's offer their supplications for felicity hereafter. [Exit.

Bloom. Fortune ! Fortune ! Well may the world pronounce thee unkind, when merit and virtue are deserted, while ingratitude and villainy revel in your smiles—Ha ! here comes the gay, the elegant, accomplish'd, inconstant, Sir Charles Leslie, who happily blends gallantry, mirth, and bravery, with every amiable qualification, and, notwithstanding all his levity, has a soul susceptible of friendship, and a heart capable of every noble act.

Enter SIR CHARLES LESLIE.

Sir Cha. Bloomfield ! who expected to have seen you quit the matrimonial yoke thus early ? Prodigious ! Turtles will cease to coo, and the waking nightingale forget to sing, when thus, by break of day, you leave the downy bed of love.

Bloom. Sir Charles, 'twas in obedience to the call of friendship I deserted my pillow.—Poor George Selby and the regiment he belongs to were this morning under marching orders.

Sir Cha. Selby ! I don't know him.

Bloom. The loss is yours. He has so much worth and honour, that if you knew him as well as I do, you'd love him as well as I do ; were merit any title to advancement, he should be a general ; but fortune often bestows preferment where 'tis least deserved.

Sir Cha. Why never introduce me to him ?

Bloom. Because his lieutenancy being his sole property, he lived within bounds, and devoted his time chiefly to the woman of his heart, with whom he has just now parted. His poverty and her father's avarice are the only bars to their union.

Sir Cha. He ought to thank his poverty for keeping at a distance a greater evil.

Bloom. Come, come, Sir Charles, matrimony is like hazard, there are mains.

Sir Cha. Ay, and chances too—you have made a very just simile. Dice and marriage are two things I could preach upon whole nights together—'tis hard to distinguish which are worst, the pride, folly, and extravagance of a wife, or the rattling of a box and dice, whose noise proclaims that the infatuated idiot is forcing into a prison himself, and providing almshouses for the rest of his family.—These ideas set liberty and interest at war within me to determine which shall conquer—ruin or the widow.

Bloom. Wou'dn't you be content this instant to go to church with her?

Sir Cha. Yes, upon condition I might follow her, in a month, to the church-yard——Marry her!—horrid!—then I must not be commonly civil to a pretty girl, or I shall be look'd on by her father and mother worse than a tax-gatherer in a country village, and all this for an ugly woman.—Nay what's worse, an old woman!—No, no, matrimony and the country are two things on which we shall never think alike.

Bloom. Why object to the country? Can mankind have greater delight than in contemplating the works of nature?

Sir Cha. I contemplate the chief works of nature, fine women: in my opinion, half a score well-dress'd ladies are infinitely superior to a wilderness of sycamores, oaks, or poplars: and I would forego all the luxury of purling streams and chirping birds for that ravishing music, the rustling of a silk petticoat.

Bloom. You may rail against retirement and matrimony, yet I am mistaken if you'll not shortly be reconciled to the latter, and that with Lady Supple; a widow possess'd of eighty thousand pounds, and the redemption of your estate mortgaged to her deceased husband, you'd find much better than being eternally teased with officers lurking about your house, and even your servants impudent for want of wages.

Sir Cha. To be sure duns are intolerable; and when some poor devil of a tradesman has told a lamentable tale of his distress, and that discharging my bill wou'd instantly relieve him and his indigent family, I have in desperation flown to her, said ten thousand fine things, and told her as many lies as invention on the rack could supply me with, but all would not do.

Bloom. I fear you have a rival that has possess'd himself of her good opinion, and when once she comes to fancy him seriously, she'll think no more of you than of her dead husband or his poor relations.

Sir Cha. You allude to that young fop, Sir Rakeish Spangle? They first met at the opera, where I should have been to attend her, but the bottle deluded me till twelve that night, the dice till six in the morning, and bed till five next evening: at which time I dress'd, went to visit her, and, to my great surprise, found him there. We rattled of indifferent things, but I soon perceived my six months address was all to no purpose.

Bloom. If you hope to gain her you must flatter—Oh! here comes your servant; seemingly in a great hurry—Something has happened.

Sir Cha. Don't be alarmed——He is very busy about nothing—He is a most extraordinary fellow. He formerly lived with an actor, and has pick'd up quotations which he eternally misapplies. I would part with him, but he is so attach'd to me; and when the other servants are teasing for wages, he begs I'll take the trouble of keeping him till he wants them.

Enter KILLEAVY.

Kill. Sir, sir, sir—

Sir Cha. What ails the fellow?

Kill. Beg pardon, sir,—but yonder is the tame

SCENE II.

Changes to a different part of the Park, with various Walks.

Enter LADY SUPPLE, followed by MISS RUSSEL.

L. Sup. For shame ! I am amazed you have not more delicacy than to attack me in this public manner ; canst thou think I trouble myself about right and wrong, child ?—My lawyer tells me, all I at present possess is my own ; and I have so entire a confidence in him, I can never alter or deviate from that opinion. Therefore, I beseech you, don't incommode the serenity of my mind.

Miss Rus. Keep down, my swelling heart, and let tame patience speak my wrongs ; for wrongs like mine need not the force or fire of passion. My deceased father, madam, left me, an only child, and twenty thousand pounds, to the care of your rapacious husband, who cruelly betrayed that generous confidence, by saying one thousand was more than the bequest, and with it banish'd me his dwelling ; he dying, you became possess'd of all his ill-got wealth.

L. Sup. Prodigious !

Miss Rus. That sum being now almost exhausted, I see the monster Penury approach with such terror, that to you I once more appeal, and sure my injuries must find redress, if misery can touch your heart, and any spark of honour, honesty, or tenderness remain there.

L. Sup. Tenderness for such insolence !

Miss Rus. Do you think the injured will not speak, that the oppressed can sleep on the hard ground, and

never groan? Or that sufferings like mine can go untold? No—violence, oppression, and injustice will make silent meekness find a tongue to accuse the unfeeling heart that wrongs an helpless orphan!

L. Sup. Bless me! What will become of me? I sha'n't recover my complexion, temper, health, and quiet these six months.

Miss Rus. Six months! Not while you live shall you know ease, or peace of mind, unless your wounded conscience forces you to yield me up my right.

L. Sup. Your right! Why your right is your poverty, and that I yield you.—Keep it—People that's wise never think now-a-days of right or wrong, so they get money;—but I can stay no longer to be entertained with your right and conscience.—Baubles for children—Will conscience keep a coach? Will conscience buy a title? Will conscience maintain an equipage? Will conscience provide an elegant estate? No, no, conscience!—It's like a negligee or long ruffles—quite out of fashion. [*Exit.*

Enter SIR CHARLES LESLIE, in haste.

Sir Cha. Ay, here she is—I thought she had escaped me again. Well encounter'd, madam.

Miss Rus. Sir! how unlucky this, and my mind in such a state; but, dear, kind, good spirits, on you must I rely. (*Aside.*)

Sir Cha. You see, madam, I am a true sportsman, and never change my game.

Miss Rus. But pray, sir, don't you hunt more for the love of sport than for the sake of the prey?

Sir Cha. No, by heaven! I loved you from the first moment I saw you, and have not since so much as dream'd, thought, or look'd at any creature in petticoats but your dear self.

Miss Rus. Ah! poor gentleman! to fall under such unhappy circumstances, as to love, admire, nay adore the woman whose face you have hardiy seen; her fortune and character unknown to you; but if you'd per-

suade me to credit the assertion, you must wear your arms across, sigh, look dismal, turn up your eyes now and then, hum a languishing air, appear confused, careless in your dress, pale-faced, speak but little, and that abrupt sentences; turn poet, and write soft sonnets; but you are quite the opposite of all these, and appear like a sturdy beggar, who asks only for form's sake, and wou'd, if you durst, boldly rob to gratify your inclination.

Sir Cha. What then have you resolved? Am I to hang or drown myself?

Miss Rus. Use your own discretion, sir; just which you please.

Sir Cha. Come, come; as your beauty bred my affection, let your kindness nourish it—Do, pr'ythee, acquaint me with your name, that a mutual agreement may take place between Sir Charles Leslie, Baronet, of one part, and miss—or lady—pray, ma'am, what do you call your name?—on the other.

Miss Rus. Really, Sir Charles, you are tolerably agreeable, and I design, one time or other, to let you know who thinks you so; but it shall not be until I am convinced you have not the least penchant for any one but myself; then, I fancy, I cou'd like you longer than a new suit, a fine chariot, a diamond necklace, or any other pretty little nick-nack.

Sir Cha. My future moments shall be devoted to you, and only you——

Miss Rus. Stop! stop, Sir Charles—your equipage, I'm told, is frequently seen waiting at a certain elderly lady's door, in——

Sir Cha. Oh! the widow, Lady Supple, you mean, surely—she's the last thing of all her sex I would be thought to address. Why, she's as disgusting as the friseur's block her head is dress'd upon—ay, and as much painted too.

Miss Rus. Oh, shame—and you'd have me believe you really admire me?

Sir Cha. By heavens, I do. Your charms, like

fate, compel my trembling steps and my fixed eyes to gaze and follow where you fly.

Miss Rus. Undone ! As I live the man is in love. He begins to talk nonsense ! then must I take my leave, and bid adieu for the present to Sir Charles the Inconstant.

Sir Cha. Surely, you won't be so cruel as to carry away my heart, and not even tell me where I may hear of it.

Miss Rus. I'll keep it safe for you : if you had it you'd bestow it much worse. Adieu, Sir Charles.

[*Exit up the walk.*]

SIR CHARLES *solus.*

Adieu ! nay, now I have you in view, I shall not quit you till I have some satisfaction, I am determined.

[*Exit after her.*]

Enter KILLEAVY.

Kill. So, so, there they go. Indeed, miss, we have you snug ; the devil's in't if she escapes us now ! Hey-day, here they come again—I must keep at a snug distance, and be quite close to observe them.

[*Retires.*]

Miss RUSSEL, followed by SIR CHARLES from the top of the stage.

Sir Cha. Confide in me so far—I'll prove constant as the sun, and daily pay my devoirs to you.

Miss Rus. What shall I do ? (*Screams.*) Undone and ruined for ever !

Sir Cha. What's the matter, madam ?

Miss Rus. Mercy on me ! I have lost——

Sir Cha. What, madam ?

Miss Rus. My father's picture, which I value above all things in the world.

Sir Cha. How, or where, did you lose it ?

Miss Rus. I can't tell. I had it at the upper end of that walk !—Oh heavens !

Sir Cha. Nay, be not uneasy : it cannot be lost. Here, Killeavy.

Kill. Sir.

Sir Cha. This lady has lost a picture somewhere here.

Miss Rus. Oh ! the only relic of a deceased parent !

Sir Cha. I am distressed to see you so afflicted. It can't be lost, madam : Killeavy, go search carefully up that walk, whilst I seek in this.

[*Exit* SIR CHARLES.

Kill. Don't fret, madam ; Oh, don't fret a vurneen. —May be you did not lose it here ; but, whether you did or did not, I'll be bound I'll find it for you.

[*Exit.*

Miss Rus. Oh ! I shall never have a moment's ease, unless——Ha ! ha ! your most obedient, Sir Charles.

[*Makes her escape.*

KILLEAVY returns.

Kill. The devil a lady or gentleman's picture I can find, except——

Enter SIR CHARLES.

Sir Cha. Well, Killeavy, have you found it ?—Where's the lady, sirrah ?

Kill. Where, sir !—O ho ! As usual, sir, because we had her fast, she's gone.

Sir Cha. Damnation, villain !—fly and overtake her ; or——

Kill. Lord, sir, it's impossible ; if you were to murder me, and then to divide me into as many pieces as there are points in th globe, I could not catch her.

Sir Cha. Follow her, rascal, quick as lightning.

Kill. Yes, sir, yes,—which—a—now I'm sure I'll follow her the way she didn't go. [*Exit.*

Sir Cha. Where can she have escaped to ? Why does she fly me thus ? What can she be ?—She's a

riddle made up of so many contradictions, that the whole sex is but an epitome of her : She's serious, gay, and seemingly virtuous—Sometimes jiltish, young, and an appearance of discretion, now confidently pert, by-and-by very modest ; she has wit, good-humour, and ill-nature.—She has—yes, I feel—I am satisfied—she has possession of my heart.

Enter KILLEAVY.

Sir Cha. Well, sir, have you overtaken her ?

Kill. Overtaken her, sir ! I thought I did—but when I spoke to her, I found it was another parson. Why, sir, you might as soon overtake a Lapland witch posting through the clouds on a broomstick.

Sir Cha. By heavens, villain, you must have seen this lady ! you are in league with her to impose upon me. I suppose she bribes you to——

Kill. Bribes me ! No, no, sir, I'm above that, I assure you, though I might take it very innocently without knowing what it was ; for 'tis so long since I saw a guinea, the devil burn me if I recollect whether it is round or square.

Sir Cha. Who can—Why does she—but rat her—I'll think no more of her—I'll take Bloomfield's advice, and marry the widow. Attend me at Lady Supple's in an hour—Yes—I'll—I don't know what to do.—Let your wise men say what they will of our being lords of the creation, I am convinced they are wrong, for a woman is more than a match for any man in Christendom. [Exit.

Kill. A woman more than a match ! I can't think that, and I am certain, I'd be a beautiful match for Sally—She's a nice—Oh she's a charm—I believe the gods have in futurity told and ordained that my master should love old ugly always, only that I might have an opportunity of being the chained-down adorer of her maid ; now I know she'll be at the old story, and vow to marry me the moment I destroy myself

for love of her—What an odd caper—She's so full of whims too—then the worst of her is, to be quite genteel, she despises the produce of her own country, and is fond of every thing foreign—I'll break her of that, or I'll break her delicate heart.—Yes, yes, yes, we have enemies enough abroad, without encouraging any within ourselves. [Exit

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

Lady SUPPLE'S Dressing Room.—SALLY discovered reading Don Quixote.

Sal. Oh! the dear fellow—What a pity he wasn't killed—I wou'dn't care a farthing for a sweetheart that wou'd refuse to die for me.—There is my dear Mr Killeavy, I do think he'll be persuaded,—then another thing makes me love him,—he's not English—That's so elegant—How charmingly my lady's lover Sir Rakeish Spangle looks; but I should like him still better, if he did not speak our common language.—

Enter Servant.

Serv. A letter for Mrs Flounce.

Sal. Let's see.—(*Exit Servant.*)—Oh! what a

seal!—a heart stuck with darts, like pins in a pincushion. (*Reads.*) “Thou fairest of the fair,—I send you this by the penny-post,—and if the letter carrier does not give it to you directly, run to the post-office to inquire for it, and then we’ll be sure to meet, for I am going to your house immediately, where I hope you’ll receive with ecstasy your ever agreeable and transported,

WILLIAM KILLEAVY.”

Pshaw!—what signifies transported!—it would be something indeed if he had been hang’d,—or shot,—or——

Enter KILLEAVY.

Kill. I wish he was with all my heart.—If the rascal is troublesome to you—Who is he, my pet?

Sal. Who!—why a person that pretends to love me.

Kill. Oh, then I join you with all my heart,—and wish he was hang’d, shot, cut in smithereens, or——

Sal. Ha, ha, ha! that’s a very good joke,—why it was yourself I meant.

Kill. A good joke to see me hang’d, or cut up!—Well, what an ignorant rascal I am.—So a thing that makes one wretched, is—a—By the powers, I thought a good joke was an action that caused mirth and delight to all parties.

Sal. O you fool! among some people nothing’s a joke, but what’s malicious, and hurts the feelings of intimate friends, or brings a burning blush into the cheeks of innocence and virtue.

Kill. Ay! this is all new,—but every thing is so changed, that curse me if I know what to make of the place or the people. Such fashions! nothing looks like what it is,—the men are all women, and the women are all men;—formerly they used to marry in order to love, and keep close to one another,—but now they are always walking together in separate

places, and their beds are so large, that it seems as if they only went together to keep asunder.

Sal. You know nothing of taste—you——

L. Sup. (*Without.*) Where is Flounce?

Sal. Heavens!—here is my lady.

Kill. Well, suppose she is,—I'm waiting for my master.

Sal. What, in her dressing room? Here—step in, or I'm ruined—she'll not remain long.—Don't stir till I come to release you.—Oh make haste, or—Oh, dear!

Kill. Well,—weep not, my fair.

Sal. I'm not weeping—I say, go in.

Kill. I came to tell you—"Your lady approaches like the rugged Prussian bear."

Sal. I tell you, go in,—or I shall be discharged.

(*Pushes him into a closet.*)

Enter LADY SUPPLE.

L. Sup. What impertinence am I fatigued with!—That Sophia Russel has so deranged me.—Where's the sal volatile?

Sal. Here, ma'am.

L. Sup. Oh, dear! I wou'dn't for all my jointure, that any of my admirers were to see me so disconcerted.

Sal. Lord, ma'am, I shou'd not mind any of them seeing me, except Sir Rakeish Spangle. He is worth being uneasy about—If I was your ladyship, I'd prefer him to all the rest, for surely he's handsomer than Sir Charles Leslie, and I am certain he's much richer; then as for old Mr Hale, there can be no——

L. Sup. An idiot, to think of me!—Does he imagine I should sacrifice my fortune, life, and (if this glass don't flatter) I may still say beauty, to such a crabbed old mortal—What return could I possibly hope from him?

Sal. Why, the return an old man generally

makes ; he'll prefer ye to the office of being his nurse, my lady.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Here's your ladyship's nephew, Master Neddy Dash.

L. Sup. Shew him up.

Serv. He's here, madam.

Dash. (*Without.*) Come, Tim, and I'll inquire where you'll place the gig. (*They enter.*)

(*TIM brings on a portmanteau, sword, and cane.*)
My dear aunt, I rejoice to see you, and am your truly devoted and obedient slave.

L. Sup. My dear nephew, I am very glad to see you ; I hope you have brought manners and good breeding from the academy ?

Dash. Yes, aunt, I flatter myself—I—a—I've had singing, fencing, and dancing masters. At the assembly last week I was all the choice, so damn'd graceful in my allemandes and cotillions—I did spring from the floor—not a soul cou'd rise like me.

Tim. That's true,—his honour was always up by break o' day.

Dash. Hold your tongue—stifle the fellow,—I mean rising high in my dancing.

Tim. Yes, his honour jumps like our jack-daw, that has one wing cut.

L. Sup. Could not you have selected another sort of servant, nephew ?

Dash. Excuse him, aunt ; he's ignorant, but very honest.—He shall refine.—He must, stifle me. I'll have him taught to read, and so forth ; then he'll be wise as well as honest.

L. Sup. You are very kind to him, poor creature.

Tim. So he is, your ladyship, and when I learn to be wise,—if I don't forget to be honest—'twill be very well. Where shall I put your honour's gig ?

Dash. Aunt, can you accommodate?—'Tis the nice thing—must not be exposed to the weather.

L. Sup. I dare say there's room in my coach-house.—Flounce, take him to the groom, and he'll dispose of 'em.

Sal. Yes, ma'am. Come along you,—a—where did you grow, I wonder! Come quickly, for if any of our visitors shou'd see such a mongrel, they'd be—Come along, I say.

Tim. Yes, ma'am, I'm coming,—I'm coming, ma'am; if you'd see me dressed, you wou'dn't look so cross,—no nor think me such a gumril: then you'd say I was as handsome a lad as ever peep'd out of a suit of clothes. [Exit with SALLY.]

Dash. Be sure to take care of Prancer.—Well, my dear aunt, I superabundantly rejoice to see you,—stifle me but you look most delightfully.—Damme, if she is not uglier than ever; but I must hum the old tabby! (Aside.)

L. Sup. Why, considering all I have fretted, 'tis wonderful that I have preserved my looks. And indeed you seem greatly altered, I shou'd scarcely have known you,—quite a new being.

Dash. New! I protest, ma'am, I don't know myself.—Bless me—I vow to gad—I have forgot where the bank stands,—may I be stifled, if the Exchange is not a mere bear-garden, all noise and confusion.—Stew me, madam, if I don't think you have saved me from ruin.

L. Sup. Indeed, I think the education of youth shou'd never be neglected.

Dash. Absolutely, had I remained in the city, behind a counter, I should never have been fit for any thing but an alderman, or a justice of peace.—Oh, horrid, filthy, quite a bore, stifle me!

L. Sup. Yet, my dear nephew, I know nothing better than trade and business for a young man.

Dash. Certainly 'tis very well in some cases, for

heavy, plodding, inanimate, stupid souls, stiver-cramped geniuses without estates; then trade is very proper; but fellows with exalted notions, great spirits, little understandings, and large fortunes, all of which I possess so amply, or I shall possess, being your heir——

L. Sup. I once had some such thought, but I am half prevailed on to listen to the persuasions and solicitations of one of my suitors, and enter into the happy enjoyment of connubial love.

Dash. What?—con—nu—love,—here's a rig—why, stifle me—What's this?—I thought you never meant to love any thing but me.

L. Sup. Those were my sentiments, 'tis true, nephew; but Sir Charles Leslie, Mr Hale, and Sir Rakeish Spangle, are tormenting me eternally, saying how wrong I should be to deprive mankind of my society.

Dash. Your money they mean,—but sure you're not such a young one, not such a green-horn, to be had?

L. Sup. I don't well understand you,—but know, that this day I mean to determine on an alliance either with Sir Charles Leslie or Sir Rakeish Spangle.

Dash. What! the fop I saw with you at the opera?—Why, he's no bigger than a wax-doll.—If he's your purchase, you're out, I tell you.—Stifle me, but you have bought at the top of the market, and when stocks fall, you'll be damn'd mad at your bargain.

L. Sup. Insolence! since you provoke me, know that I will marry.

Dash. So will I, if that be all, dowager.

L. Sup. I hope you'll ask my consent!

Dash. Not I—you don't ask mine; and as to your grasshopper, Sir Rakeish——

L. Sup. I say, sir——

Dash. Damme, if I care three per cent. what you

say—perhaps I'll convince you the house is mine,—my father left it in trust for me, with your late husband ; your own lawyer says he knows every foot of the terra firma and the terra inscripta—He's a devilish honest fellow. He offer'd to insure it all to me if I'd give him half.

L. Sup. Villain, have you been tampering with my lawyer ? What a world ! at the very moment that I was thinking of your welfare—I intended you should marry that charming, amiable girl, Sophia Russel, and would have given five hundred pounds between you, with which you might have taken a shop, and—

Dash. Shop ! Wife !—Five hundred pounds !—that's good—No, no, I have had a taste of what it is to be a gentleman,—yes, and I've got some hints about my estate—I know what it is, where it is, and how much it is—Mr Demur is my friend. He'll pilot me into this house, and all the rest of my property—I'll go to law ; stifle me, but I'll go to law.

L. Sup. Is this your gratitude for my care of your education and morals ? out of pure humanity to—

Dash. Yes, your humanity would leave me as it has Miss Russel ;—but law, O glorious law, and glorious lawyers ; yes, yes, they'll shew me the straight road into my property through Chancery-lane.

L. Sup. They'll be apter to shew you the straight road into the Fleet through Chancery-lane.

Dash. We'll see that : indeed, old one, we've twigg'd you.

L. Sup. Old one !—monstrous impudence !—you take these liberties because I'm an unprotected woman ; but, perhaps before to-morrow, you may hear of a person being master of this house, that shall secure me from ever being troubled with your impertinence.

[*Exit.*

Dash. Master of this—O damme, but I'll keep possession,—I'll go to law.

Enter MISS RUSSEL.

Ah! my lass of spirit—how do you do? how do you do? I haven't seen you this age; my aunt wants me to marry you, but I won't, not I; no, "I'll rove and I'll range, I'll love and I'll change;" that's my way; besides, I'm to have a great fortune, and you know you are stiver-cramp'd,—you haven't a shilling.

Miss Rus. Wretch! upbraid me with my poverty, that poverty which the credulity of a noble-minded, unsuspecting parent has brought on me! I now come for the last time to require justice from the hands of your cruel aunt—should she refuse——

Dash. Apply to me.

Miss Rus. Never;—my soul must spurn an obligation where I scorn even an acquaintance; no,—my next appeal shall be very different;—thank heaven, I enjoy the blessing of residing in a country where the law provides a guardian for the fatherless; who, with a parent's care, redresses the complaints of oppressed, helpless orphans.

Dash. What, you'll go to law? That's right; it's the only way to manage this old quiz. Life must be supported. I'll tell you how I live: I gallant all day, drink all night, walk the streets, break lamps, kick up rows, (I'm first at a row;) how they do ogle me in the theatres—the women, ay, and the men too, they're all afraid of me. The moment I go into a box, off the party set to another, all owing to my way, the careless twirl of my stick. Two watches! glass, look bold, courageous, and negligent, just as if I could cane a man without being out of humour.

Miss Rus. I dare say you are very courageous, that is, if courage consists in boasting to women of exploits that never happen'd; insulting them, and

shrinking from any man that has honour to defend or protect 'em.

Dash. What's that you say?—Shrink——stay till Mr Demur gets my fortune, then I'll—damme, I wish I was a captain——I believe I'll go into the army. I'll be a great officer. How I'll command and strut, and—don't you think so, my love?

Miss Rus. Don't mistake, sir; a good soldier is polite, brave, humane, and generous. He holds his life dear only to offer it in the service of his king and country. Pray where is Lady Supple? I must see her.

Dash. She's in the next room; but you sha'n't stir; don't mind her; I'll take a snug house, that's my way; I'm a man of honour; I told you I should not marry—but——

Miss Rus. Stop, thou reptile; let me pass this instant, or I'll call for assistance.

KILLEAVY comes from the door.

Kill. And assistance you shall have, whether you call for it or not. Ha?—Well, to be sure—Oh! may be it's not our tame wild duck.

Dash. Eh! what!—who's this?

Kill. Who? why me, to be sure; who the devil else cou'd it be? What ails you, ma'am?

Miss Rus. Dare to talk to me in a style——

Kill. Oh, the——damme, if I know what to call him!—a beast, sure, that's a human creature, must love and regard a pretty woman. Come, madam, with your leave, I'll be after handing you from this agreeable villain to the care of Sir Charles Leslie.

Miss Rus. As I live, 'tis Sir Charles's man—Now I am discover'd.

Dash. You hand her! I command you to quit the house, and leave the lady as you found her.

Kill. To be sure, sir; yes, you shall see me go directly, *exit signum*,—but if this lady chuses, or wish-

es, to be of my party, she most assuredly shall go out of this room with me all alone by herself.

Dash. Shall she? (*Drawing the sword which TIM brought in with the portmanteau.*) Now resign the lady, or else—damme, but the sun shall shine thro' you this instant.

Miss Rus. Oh, heavens! leave me, sir, pray do!

Kill. Pray, ma'am, discompose yourself;—though you stand arm'd there, before me, *non est inventus*, if you were my own mother, and to behave so, I'd tell you plainly you're no gentleman. Oh! I wish there was an act of parliament against any man's wearing a sword that could draw it in a bad cause!

Dash. Come, no rudeness—acknowledge what brought you here. Give up the lady, and beg pardon this moment.

Miss Rus. Pray do, sir.

Kill. Madam, if you gave a thousand worlds, I could not say, "Sir, I beg your pardon,"—but I'll settle it this way. We'll talk a little jocosely.

Dash. By heavens, I'll run you through—take care—there's no jesting with edge-tools.

Kill. Well, I think it's better jesting than being in earnest with 'em. So, sir, if you please, I'll tell you how—a—this lady is in love. No, my master, —no, not that: 'tis my friend Horatio loves—the—he's running away every-where, and I'm running after him. He's like Cleopatra, walking up silver in cinders to meet Mr Marc Antony. There she stands—only look. (*During this speech he approaches DASH, and seizes his sword.*) Now I believe the sun will shine through you.

Miss Rus. O, sir, don't kill him,—'twill be cruel.

Dash. Cruel! damme, 'twill be murder. Sure you wou'dn't be so mean, so ungenteel—was there ever such a thing—Draw on an unarm'd, defenceless man! Throw away the sword, and then—

Kill. There, and what then?

Dash. Why then—I'll give you my address.—
Where is yours?

Kill. Mine is and ever shall be to him that could insult an innocent female—This! (*Canes him.*)—
How he canters! Do you think I'm to leather you by the mile? This fellow has run heats at the Curragh, or Newmarket—but I'll—

Miss Rus. Hold, sir, hold, for heaven's sake.

Kill. I ask your pardon, madam, for the liberty I have taken of dusting his jacket in your presence: but I have done—though a little more of it would be of great service to him.

Dash. Stifle me, if you're a gentleman, there's my card—that's my way.

Miss Rus. He is out of danger. I'll make my escape. Fortune, I once more thank thee. [*Exit.*

Kill. Card. (*Reads.*) “Set pin—silver buckles—four guineas!” Why, this address is a pawn-broker's ticket.

Dash. A pawn-bro—Death and hell—some rascal has put it in my pocket!

Kill. Rascal! that you may swear, for it was your own sweet-scented self. Don't you think so, madam? Ha! Where is the lady?

Dash. Lady! he's a terrible passionate fellow!

Kill. Villain! Where's the lady?

Dash. I don't know.

Kill. Who is she?

Dash. I don't know.

Kill. What's her name?

Dash. I don't know.

Kill. What brought her here?

Dash. I don't know.

Kill. Was there ever such an intelligent rascal! I believe you've pawn'd her. How—What—Where are you? [*Exit DASH.*

Dash. (*Without.*) I don't know.

Enter SIR CHARLES LESLIE.

Sir Cha. What's the matter ?

Kill. O, sir, I've catch'd the lady !

Sir Cha. What lady ?

Kill. Oh, you know the tame wild duck.

Sir Cha. Ha ! Where is she ?

Kill. She's here—that is—she's just gone this moment.

Sir Cha. Which way ?

Kill. The devil a know I know, sir,—but there she was, and there I was, and there he was, behaving clandestently ; and when I had her to a certainty in my hands, I found she was off again, gone—and so here I am *solus omnes*.

Sir Cha. 'Sdeath, sir ! why didn't you come and tell me ?

Kill. Lord, sir, when I was with her, how cou'd I be with you ! Sure I cou'dn't be in two places at one time, unless I was a bird.

Sir Cha. Can you give no account of her ? I must pursue her : she cannot be out of the neighbourhood. Follow me.

Kill. Sir, sir, didn't you come to see the old Lady Supple, with her beautiful cash ?

Sir Cha. Damn the old—— [*Exit.*

Kill. Och, honey, with all my heart. The devil fire the old—Stop, master Billy—She's a woman, and don't abuse her. Oh, the darling babbies, with their coaxings, and their wheedlings, and their little noses turn'd up, and their scolding so sweetly, who'd abuse or be angry with them ? Sure, we know all the time what they're about,—poor things, myself dotes upon 'em ; by—a—the honestest man in the world, that behaves like a rogue to a woman, must be a down-right villain. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

*A Street.**Enter* MISS RUSSEL.

Miss Rus. I can hardly think myself safe ; that poor honest fellow—I'm inclined to think his master, Sir Charles, loves me,—and could I recover from that avaricious Lady Supple even a part of what I am justly entitled to, he should not long remain ignorant of my name, my fortune, or the state of my heart. For his sake, I believe, I must try to obtain by stratagem, what I never can expect from her justice. As I live, yonder comes Sir Charles. He has not seen me. I'll make this effort, though a desperate one, to avoid him (*Knocks at a door. Servant enters.*) I desire instantly to speak with your lady.

[*Goes in with Servant.*]

Enter SIR CHARLES.

Sir Cha. Ah ! madam ! have I caught you ?—Here she went in. I'll follow—Hold, hold ! this may not be her house—I'll watch her coming out—no, that might be too long to wait ; I'll boldly ask to see her. [Knocks.]

*Enter Servant.**Serv.* Servant, sir.*Sir Cha.* Sir, your servant—pray, sir,—a—

Serv. What's your business, sir? Did you want my master?

Sir Cha. No, good sir, I wanted your mistress.

Serv. Oh! my young lady, is it, sir, you want?

Sir Cha. Upon my soul I can't tell. Yes, yes, I believe it is.

Serv. I don't imagine——indeed, sir, I'm sure she'll not see you, sir, (*SIR CHARLES gives money.*) but if you please to walk into the parlour, I'll go and try.

Sir Cha. Much obliged to you. Say I must speak with her.

Serv. I shall, sir.

Sir Cha. Yes, I have her now—providentially—happy discovery! [*Exit, following the Servant.*]

SCENE III.

The Inside of MR HALE'S House.

Enter EMMA and MISS RUSSEL.

Miss Rus. Your excusing this intrusion, and so kindly accepting my apology, lays me under the most sensible obligations—it imports me extremely not to be seen.

Enter Maid.

Maid. Madam, the gentleman says he cannot be mistaken—he insists that you are here. He saw you come in. I had much ado to keep him from coming up—Lor, I think I hear him on the stairs. [*Exit.*]

Miss Rus. 'Tis in your power to assist me most es-

entially—suffer me to retire into this room. Fortunately our dresses correspond, and——

Miss Em. With regret I'm forced to decline what you propose. A resolution I have made to converse with no man, (my father excepted,) until the return of a dearly esteem'd friend, whose absence——

Enter Maid.

Maid. Ma'am, I never met such a boisterous gentleman in my life. In spite of every thing I can say or do, he insists on coming up stairs.

Miss Rus. By that dear friend, and by the hopes you have of his return, let me conjure you to keep me from the sight of this gentleman.

[*Leaves her cloak with EMMA, and exit.*]

Maid. As I live, ma'am, here he is.

Enter SIR CHARLES.

Sir Cha. My dear ma'am, I have found so much difficulty in approaching you, that nothing but your beauty can atone, or apologize, for the apparent rudeness, that—Hey-day!—she is gone again!

Em. Inform me, sir, what could encourage you to this strange pursuit.

Sir Cha. Yes, I am mistaken——what shall I say?
[*Aside.*]

Em. Why should you follow me, sir?

Sir Cha. Faith, madam, because you run away from me.

Em. Do you know me then, sir?

Sir Cha. Not I—Devil take me, but I must on now. (*Aside.*) When I saw you to-day, madam, I own I took you for another lady. Your statures and habits are much the same,——yet, shou'd any chance give you an opportunity of seeing her, you wou'd be satisfied how much she is honour'd in a supposed resemblance to you—and faith she is tolerably handsome—to a man that had not seen you.

Em. You are now convinced of your mistake, sir, which I excuse ; my father I expect every moment, to whom I shou'd find a difficulty in accounting for your being here.

Sir Cha. I understand you, madam. But suffer this heart to take a distant gleam of hope along with it, only to——

Em. Pray, sir, be assured no pretence—no delay—not all your rhapsody or eloquence, can give me other impressions of you than those I've already form'd.

Sir Cha. Ten thousand blessings on you for these last words,—they're mysterious, yet they are kind. To a soul like mine, that wakes and starts at the least dawn of joy, they set its every faculty on fire. I go, that I may hope to return. This charming girl is almost as handsome as little fly-away. (*Aside.*) Adieu, thou lovely creature. O the overflowing springs of cool refreshing beauty ! [*Exit.*

Em. Madam, permit me to release you,——(*Bringing on MISS RUSSEL.*) I congratulate your escape from the levity and wildness of your pursuer.

Miss Rus. O my heart ! When the service you have done, ma'am, proves an obligation or an injury, be satisfy'd I shall not be insensible to either.

Em. Bless me ! I fear, madam, you are as liable to mistakes as the gentleman.

Miss Rus. I fear I am more subject to 'em, madam, particularly when I make a friend of one who wou'd destroy all my hopes of happiness, by encouraging the addresses of him who is dearer to me than life.

Em. Is it thus you thank me ?—To serve a stranger, I have violated a most solemn vow ! But, as our interview commenced abruptly, so let it end. The servant shall attend you to the door.

[*Rings, and exit.*

Miss Rus. False Sir Charles ! Duped by a man I thought sincere ; robb'd by her who shou'd protect

entially—suffer me to retire into this room. Fortunately our dresses correspond, and——

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[*Leaves her cloak with EMMA, and exit.*]

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[*Rings, and exit.*

Miss Rus. False Sir Charles ! Duped by a man I thought sincere ; robb'd by her who shou'd protect

me. Wretched, wretched Sophia! Yet why shou'd I despair? those spirits which have supported me hitherto, I trust, will not forsake me.—I'll inquire of the servant this lady's name—Write a letter to Sir Charles as from her, desiring an interview, by which means I shall discover his real sentiments.

Mr H. (Without.) If any body brings me money, call me immediately—*(Enters.)*—and, do you hear, if any one want money, I'm not at home, nor sha'n't be to-day. *(Seeing Miss R., bows.)* Egad, the very identical pretty girl I have so often followed in the street. Madam. *(Bows.)*

Miss Rus. Sir,—as I live, old Mr Hale, one of the widow'slovers!—How unfortunate!—but I am certain he don't know me, though I do him. *(Aside.)*

Mr H. Who is—ah! I suppose 'tis the young woman that wanted a place, and was recommended to Emma. She's very beautiful. *(Aside.)* I hope you and my daughter have not disagreed?

Miss Rus. Pardon me, sir, we have; but I fear the fault was mine.

Mr H. No, no, it could not be your fault, you are faultless—you—Egad I don't know what to say to her:—she looks so fine, and so—yet why should I be afraid?—she's only a lady's waiting woman. *(Aside.)*

Miss Rus. Sir, your most obedient.

(Offering to go.)

Mr H. O thou charming girl! Ten thousand fivers are not equal to the tortures I endure!

Miss Rus. Sir, what's the matter? what sudden fit has seiz'd you?

Mr H. Love! my angel! love! One smile, my goddess!

Miss Rus. Ridiculous! I desire, sir—

Mr H. The sweets of lilies, jessamin, and roses dwell on those lips; to touch would be transporting.

Miss Rus. Was ever any thing so absurd! Yet I am

tempted to humour this wretch, and punish his folly. (*Aside.*) It shall be so——Lord, sir, how can you flatter me? I——

Mr H. Flatter! Not I—No, no, 'tis your fops that are in love with themselves who flatter, and don't regard what they say: Why, child, one of these cold-cream coxcombs will spend half a-day doting on his glass, prating to himself, and practising grimaces against he goes abroad, in hopes every female he meets will be as much in love with the animal as he is himself.

Miss Rus. Indeed, sir, I don't think any thing more disgusting than the impertinent vanity and conceit of these creatures, who have robb'd our sex of trifles, which were agreeable enough in women, but are intolerably nauseous in those who wou'd be thought men.

Mr H. And faith, my love, your sex is pretty even with 'em; for 'tis no novelty now to see a Venus in every street with a helmet and plume, like an Alexander, mounted as if in a triumphal car, managing six in hand, with the ease and appearance of a Hercules—but this is going from the subject we were talking of—O thou enchanting---were I possess'd of Ovid's softness, I should want art to tell the vastness of my passion!

Miss Rus. What an old rogue! (*Aside.*) Don't be angry, sir, if I am rather an infidel. I cannot help distrusting you.

Mr H. I'll put it beyond the power of doubt; and, to confirm your wavering faith, here's a convincing proof. Till now my chief and only bliss was wealth, but you have made a convert of me—This purse is yours.

Miss Rus. Mine, sir?

Mr H. Yours! This ring is yours, and this bank bill: I'll load you with riches enough to satisfy the

craving appetite of avarice itself. Can I offer greater proofs of my sincerity—my love—my——

Miss Rus. Prudence, a moment by your leave.—
(*Aside.*) Lord, sir, who knows but perhaps you may be as false and cruel as those insignificant fops you were just describing.—They, I am told, protest and make love exactly as you do.

Mr H. Not they: damn 'em, they ha'n't it in their power to make love as I do, poor devils! not worth a groat.

Miss Rus. Ah, sir! but you'll allow I'm right in not believing too hastily.

Mr H. Yes, I do, I do, thou charmer! Always be sure the bill is good before you discount it. I admire your caution; but surely you cannot doubt me when I give such security.—Your beauty caught me, but your sense has enslaved me: where did'st thou get it? How came you so accomplished?

Miss Rus. I have studied, sir, only in the school of nature, which does not always bestow birth and fortune, yet sometimes gives sense enough not to be unhappy without them. Excuse me, sir; indeed I cannot remain any longer here.

Mr H. Well, well—give me a smile to live upon,—bless me with one kind word: only say when and where we may meet again.

Miss Rus. You shall see me, when, perhaps, you'll blush to own you ever spoke to me.

Mr H. Impossible!

Miss Rus. Well, you shall see me very shortly.—Adieu, adieu, thou agreeable deceiver!

Mr H. Agree—Oh ravishing!—I'm distracted! Farewell! Ten thousand transports on this sweet hand. You'll let me hear from you, or see you soon—when?—say when?

Miss Rus. I can't exactly say at present.

Mr H. Well, well, you'll think of me.

Miss Rus. Rest assured I shall think of tormenting

you, you old sinner, as far as the scope of my invention will allow. (*Aside.*) Farewell, sir. Oh! now for my letter. (*Aside.*) (*Going out, turns back, looks at him, then sighs, and exit.*)

Mr H. O I'm overcome! I'm—I have her! I have her!—What shall I do with myself? where shall I go? How shall I—Eh!—Stop! It's time I shou'd visit Lady Supple. If I can marry her, get possession of her estates, and of this young creature's affection, I shall have enough to make me happy while I live. Oh wealth! how wilt thou bless me. Oh beauty! how wilt thou delight me. Joy! Joy! Oh, how I shall hug myself thus wrapt in pleasure! (*Exit.*)

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

A Chamber in Mr BLOOMFIELD'S House.

BLOOMFIELD sen. and Child discovered.

Child. Ah! but when I grow a big man, then my papa says I shall have a real gun, and be a captain.

Bloom. sen. Ah! but I hope he'll change his mind, when I recollect the many anxious heart-rending hours his absence caused me to endure.—But, thank heaven, he returned laden with wealth, accompanied

by honour, and rescued from penury these grey hairs—Oh, how painful to see his virtuous wife squander such a noble property—I cannot live to see the fatal end of it, and pray heaven their lovely boy here may never feel it.

Child. Sure you'll live till I'm a captain, and have an army?

Bloom. sen. An army, child! you should say a company: to raise an army of men requires more wealth and power than you can ever hope to have.

Child. Ah! but I'll have an army for all that—I'll tell you what I'll do—I'll coax all the pretty women, and take them with me, then, you know, the men will all be sure to come after them.

Bloom. sen. My lovely boy—

Enter Mrs BLOOMFIELD and CAREFUL the Steward.

Mrs Bloom. Tell not me of patience. Shall I deprive myself of every joy the world affords?—Was I not born and bred in elegance? taught only to wish, and then possess that wish? Are the new liveries brought home, the pharaoh, hazard, and card tables set? The perfumed wax-lights ready, and ethereal spirits for the lamps—I'll create admiration abroad, and excite wonder at home.

Bloom. sen. Consider how vast the expence must be, my dear child—not even the first nobility make such an appearance.

Mrs Bloom. Then I shall be the more regarded—Go instantly—pay for my box at the opera, and secure tickets for the first concert.

Stew. To-day I cannot, madam—the money I had is entirely exhausted.

Mrs Bloom. What!

Bloom. sen. Softly—perhaps to-morrow—

Mrs Bloom. To-morrow! I say go instantly—and I to be—

Enter Mr BLOOMFIELD.

Bloom. What! angry, my dear?

Mrs Bloom. I am angry to be so miserably restrained, impeded in my pleasures, even by your domestics; your very steward presumes to follow your's and your father's example, and preach frugality.

Bloom. Obey your lady without hesitation. (*Exit Steward.*) My example! in what do you accuse me?

Bloom. sen. Let not passion possess your minds—my children, reason with mildness, and the goodness of your own hearts will bring you to a sense of what is right. (*Takes the child's hand.*) Live in affection, my children—happy in thy father's blessing, and still happier in your own virtues. (*Exit with the child.*)

Bloom. My dear, how can you complain? Have I not complied with all your desires even to a fault? against my own reason? quitted the country, changed a calm and retired life for this luxuriant town, composed of noise, dissipation, and profligacy?

Mrs Bloom. The country! I would not endure the country conversation again to be a lady of six manors—What a bustle they make about housewifery, and breeding their daughters as if they were designed for service—then the men are such wretches! To hear a creature make himself and his horse merry with whistling—Oh! what delight there is in cock-fighting—then the harmonious music of the hounds, and the charming melody of their masters' snoring after a hard day's hunting.

Bloom. When content and those pleasures surrounded you, you lived secure and innocent—beloved of all, praised for your hospitality; you might be envied, but malice knew not where you dwelt.

Enter Steward.

Stew. Here, madam, is the perfumer's bill—the particulars are enormous.

Mrs Bloom. No matter, let him have his money—I detest an argument with such creatures.

Stew. The jeweller, madam, is——

Mrs Bloom. Oh pay him, pay him directly—he must not be disobliged.

Stew. Then the mercer's bill is out of all reason, madam—'tis but three months, and the amount is four hundred pounds.

Mrs Bloom. He earns what's extravagant by his attendance; 'tis diverting to have half-a-dozen of them here in a morning, to tumble their goods, buy nothing, and send them off, by saying, Lord, what an odious assortment you have got!

Stew. Here are several small bills of 30 or 40 pounds, madam, and I have not ten guineas in the——

Mrs Bloom. How can you, Mr Bloomfield, suffer me to be thus tortured by a——

Bloom. Have you really no money?

Stew. You'll see by that account, sir, that I have not——

Bloom. Amazing! shall I have my doors beset with honest men, made poor and wretched through the indiscretion of my family—go directly, take the writings of my Dorsetshire estate, raise what money you can upon them, and pay every creature.—(*Exit Steward.*) Let me not suffer the disgrace of being forced to that which common honesty shou'd dictate to every feeling mind.—What misery and desolation must this extravagance occasion!

Mrs Bloom. Extravagance! Is it more than is requisite for a woman of my birth, education, and fortune?

Bloom. I'm not ignorant of your quality, madam, but surely some of these expences might be retrenched with credit to that birth and education which you boast.

Mrs Bloom. Upon my word, this is a most delightful sermon—any thing more?

Bloom. Yes—your midnight revels, your masquerades, which affect as much your character as my estate. Take heed—the virtuous know 'tis not enough to clear themselves, but to give no cause even for suspicion; and how despicable a state matrimony be, when a husband, who is the sanctuary and guardian of a woman's honour, must be obliged to the discretion of his wife for the security of his own!

Mrs Bloom. Mr Bloomfield, you may live as you please; but society, pleasure, and elegance I am entitled to, and those I will have.

Bloom. Yes, I fear you will, to our ruin.—Is there no means to prevent it?—I'll try (*Aside.*)—Well, my love, perhaps you're in the right, and my conduct has been erroneous. We live but to edify, therefore be witness of the resolution I have taken, which is from this moment to pursue what you call the joys of life, spare no expence, but revel, enjoy society, laugh at penury, and—

Mrs Bloom. Penury! 'tis the miser's curse, who dares not use the wealth he is possessed of—the very chest wherein it lies concealed enjoys as much of it, as he—that cannot taste, the owner dares not.

Bloom. True, my love.—O pleasure! why hast thou fled from me so long! But now I bid thee welcome to this habitation.—Let my steward attend, and all my servants; my hospitable doors shall open wide, and the world shall find a welcome here.

Mrs Bloom. You surprise and delight me—now you are obliging indeed——this is the way to be truly happy.

Bloom. (*Aside.*) Truly wretched, I fear.

Mrs Bloom. Do you dine at home to-day, my love?

Bloom. Yes, and shall have an elegant assemblage of our most intimate friends.

Mrs Bloom. Dear me—I'm sorry my engagements are so particular—they force me from you—but I

shall return early, to meet a party I have invited to cards.—Will you excuse me?

Bloom. Certainly. But I had much rather your engagement would——

Mrs Bloom. That is so gallant, and at the same time so affectionate—It causes,—good heaven!—I declare it brings tears—What can—but we must not be melancholy—Adieu! [Exit.]

Bloom. A strange humour this that I have taken; I am determined to dance, play, entertain, appear as gay, and squander money as fast as she can. If she has any judgment, 'twill awake her into reason. It must—it shall—my flattering hopes assure me of success.—Again, I shall enjoy her friendly confidence, her cheerful smiles, and all the hoarded joys of her indulgent heart.—Wou'd husbands, in general, tenderly endeavour to reclaim, by gentle means, wives who innocently stray, divorces wou'd become rare, Doctors Commons useless, and many virtuous minds escape from public odium.

Enter LIEUTENANT SELBY.

Is it possible! I am astonished and rejoiced, my dear friend, at this unlooked-for, but welcome return—but what—I hope love, all powerful love, has not——

Sel. Oh no!—I had scarce got to the place of embarkation, when I received my noble patron's letter, with an account of his having obtained an exchange for me to a regiment of cavalry. I lost no time, you may easily imagine, in coming to town to acknowledge my gratitude to him, friendship to you, and ardent love for my dearest Emma.

Bloom. Well, she keeps pace with you, love as much as you please—your absence has made her a second Penelope.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir Charles Leslie, sir.

Sel. Allow me to retire, and send a note to acquaint my Emma I am here, and shall wait on her the moment her father's absence grants me an opportunity.

Bloom. In my study you'll find pen and ink. I don't expect Sir Charles to delay ; or, if he should, I know he would be proud of your acquaintance.

(Exit SELBY.)

Enter SIR CHARLES.

Sir Cha. Oh, Bloomfield ! my dear fellow—such an adventure—such a circumstance.

Bloom. What adventure ? What circumstance ? Does it pertain to love or war ?

Sir Cha. Love ! love ! my good friend ! Oh, Bloomfield, such a woman !

Bloom. Yes, all yours are such women ; but who is she ?

Sir Cha. I don't know, therefore am come to you to inquire. She lives just five doors off on the right hand.

Bloom. Five doors ! let me consider ; ah ! 'tis impossible : it can't be.

Sir Cha. True, upon my soul—I observed the house exactly. Do you know who lives there ?

Bloom. Yes, so well, that I am certain you're mistaken.

Sir Cha. Mistaken ! Is there a young lady in that house of extraordinary beauty ?

Bloom. There is Emma, the daughter of my friend Mr Hale.

Sir Cha. Then I have been in conversation with her—I tell you I followed her home.

Bloom. Psha ! 'twas the maid you saw. Where's

the lady you went in pursuit of this morning?—What was she?

Sir Cha. Why she—I can't tell any thing about her—I own she lives more in my heart than any woman I have ever seen; and I am obliged to be in love elsewhere, to divert the melancholy thoughts which intrude on her account.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Your man, sir, brought this letter—he says, 'twas left with directions to deliver it immediately into your own hands.

Sir Cha. From some creditor, I suppose. Here, Bloomfield, is a damper. Can any thing be more distressing than having the most anxious desire to be just, and, through the villainy of others, be deprived of the power (*Opens the letter.*) Hey-day!—(*Reads.*) “Approach—a—love—um—um—unhappy
EMMA HALE.”

Pray, did not you say the lady's name was Emma Hale?

Bloom. Yes, I did.

Sir Cha. Oh! the heavenly, bewitching!—D—m—me, but I thought she looked as if her name was Emma Hale. Here, here, thou infidel, here's conviction that I have seen her—nay, more—that I am to see her again—the sweet, delicious—O, I must send to her directly! (*Going.*)

Bloom. I blush for you, Sir Charles,—a man of your sense and honour attempt to insinuate any thing so prejudicial to a lady's virtue.

Sir Cha. I insinuate any thing prejudicial to a lady's virtue—no! May he that could slander any part of that sex, whom we are bound in nature and honour to protect and defend,—may he—the greatest ill I can wish him in this world is to be excluded their dear society—may he never even have a quarrel with 'em, that he may never enjoy the superlative felicity

of a reconciliation ;—no, by heavens !—nothing—not even our friendship could induce me to mention the circumstance to you, but that I required your assistance in discovering who she is.

Bloom. Believe me, you are in an error.

Sir Cha. Will her hand-writing convince you ?

Bloom. The letter must be a forgery.

Sir Cha. I have it—suffer me to appoint her here, and——

Bloom. Here ! surely you have more respect for Mrs Bloomfield than to propose meeting——

Sir Cha. 'Tis for the sake of the lady's honour I propose it. She desires me to—nay, you shall have the entire letter. (*Reads.*) “The surprise of your unexpected approach, and the apprehension of my father's return, I fear betrayed me into rudeness. Your declarations of love seemed to be uttered with a degree of sincerity. If really so, your honour I shall trust to as a security for mine : I wish to explain the motives for my behaviour. Send your servant to Storey's Gate directly, and he shall conduct you to the unhappy
EMMA HALE.”

Now, my dear Bloomfield, 'twill be acting the part of a mutual friend to let me appoint her here.

Enter SELBY, hastily.

Sel. Pardon me, sir ; being in the next room, 'twas impossible to avoid hearing your conversation, and having some influence over my friend Bloomfield, ventured out to join my solicitations in entreating him to comply with your request.

Sir Cha. Sir, you're extremely kind. I am infinitely obliged to you—what say you, Bloomfield ?

Bloom. Say—that you are mad.

Sel. Oh ! you must grant permission ; being a lady of honour, there can be no impropriety in admitting her to your house. I request it as a most particular favour.

Sir Cha. Sir, your friendship binds me to you—Ah! I see you are a man of gallantry. You know how to feel for a man in my situation—but this Bloomfield, is coldness itself—an anchorite.

Bloom. Well, as you (*To SELBY*) so particularly wish it, Sir Charles may give her the meeting here, but I'll wager my life you are wrong—when do you expect her?

Sir Cha. In a few minutes. I'll go and dispatch my servant instantly—for your kind interference, I must take another opportunity, sir, to offer my acknowledgments, and hope to be honour'd with your acquaintance. (*Exit.*)

Sel. Is this your Penelope? This the woman that——

Bloom. Why, can you believe 'tis she?

Sel. 'Tis impossible to doubt it.

Bloom. Have you written to her?

Sel. No.

Bloom. Mind not her father in this case, but go see her, and, take my word, you'll find her innocent. (*Seeing EMMA.*) Amazing! whom have we here?

Sel. 'Tis she, by Heavens! O deceitful, cruel woman! (*He retires. Throws himself on a sofa.*)

Enter EMMA.

Em. Mr Bloomfield, your servant.

Bloom. Madam!

Em. You seem astonished, sir.

Bloom. I must confess I am, madam.

Em. The confidence your friend reposes in you, sir, is the cause of mine. Where is he?—He'll scarce believe that I am here.

Bloom. Indeed, madam, I scarcely can myself believe that you are here.

Em. Sir, if my visit be troublesome, or unseasonable, 'tis your friend's fault. Where is he? Let me see him.

Sel. (*Coming forward.*) This is beyond all bearing! Wretched, imprudent woman!

Em. Mr Selby, are you displeased to see me?

Sel. Displeased! that guilt can so assume the face of innocence! (*Going.*

Em. Why! why! wherefore would you go?

Sel. To make room for the gentleman you came to meet.

Em. What gentleman? I came to you, and only you.

Sel. Deceitful woman! You knew not I was here. No, no—you thought me too far off to disturb your assignation—and I assure you, madam, 'twas my ill fortune, not my design. However, I leave the field open for my happier rival, as no doubt your lover will be shortly here.

Em. That is a title none can claim but you.

Sel. Madam, I'm not fool enough to be your sport—Farewell! (*Going.*

Bloom. Nay, stay! I'm certain she's innocent.—Her tongue, her eyes, and that flood that swells 'em, vindicate her heart.

Sel. They do but shew her practice in dissimulation—I go, perhaps, never to return. Adieu! my dearest friend! (*Exit.*

Em. Oh! Mr Bloomfield, follow him—his manner of leaving me is still more severe than even his censures against me.

Enter SIR CHARLES LESLIE.

Sir Cha. Ha! here! my happiness is greater than I cou'd have hoped: I didn't expect you quite so soon; I trust I have not made you wait.

Em. Wait, sir! What can he mean? as I live 'tis the strange gentleman who followed the lady into our house. (*Aside.*

Sir Cha. You are offended I was not here to receive you, but——

Em. Indeed, sir, I am not.

Sir Cha. Confirm it by a smile then; beg pardon, Bloomfield,—’tis your presence displeases the lady.

Bloom. I shou’d be sorry to intrude——

Em. Mr Bloomfield, pray don’t leave me with an entire stranger.

Sir Cha. Oh, I perceive your caution, though you might rely on his secrecy—I shall withdraw, as if I did not know you. *(Aside to her.)*

Em. No whispering, pray, sir. I have not the vanity to be thought of your acquaintance, and I resolve you shall never have the mortification of being mine.

Bloom. Not acquainted with you, madam! I thought you came hither to meet him. Of this I’m confident, he came to meet you.

Em. Pray, sir, did you come here to meet me?

Sir Cha. To be sure I did—and, as Mr Bloomfield is apprized of the whole affair, there can be no impropriety in shewing the commission which authorised me to expect you.

Em. What is this, sir?

Sir Cha. What is this, madam! Why ’tis your letter—surely you won’t deny it.

Em. I must, upon my honour.

Sir Cha. Oh! I see she is determined to deny every thing. Well, ma’am, and you’ll deny perhaps ever seeing me before, and you’ll deny that I follow’d you home to your house, and you’ll deny that I was admitted, and you’ll deny——

Em. Allow me to undeceive you, sir, in one particular; upon my veracity it was not me you follow’d in the street.

Sir Cha. Not you!

Em. No, indeed, sir, the lady was an entire stranger to me; she seemed so anxious to avoid you, that, with the most earnest solicitation, she prevailed on

me (being nearly the same stature) to acknowledge myself the person you pursued, and Heaven knows how fatal it has been to me. *

Sir Cha. I thought 'twas—I cou'dn't have been deceived. Yes, 'twas Miss Fly-away again. It must be some fiend—but, madam, this letter—

Em. I am entirely ignorant of every thing relating to—

Bloom. I perceive 'tis a plot upon you, Sir Charles. Did you know of Selby's return? (To EMMA.)

Em. I did. My maid told me she had seen him enter your house: I knew he would not venture to my father's, and, without hesitation, flew to meet him here.

Sir Cha. Yes, she has hummed me again—this must be her letter. *

Em. Mr Bloomfield, let me entreat you to go in search of him. Explain this mystery, and bring him to his faithful wretched Emma.

Bloom. I will about it directly. In the mean time, permit me to solicit the honour of your company this evening; Sir Charles, we rely on you. Adieu. You'll excuse me—we wou'd not leave you; but I see your servant—he may have some business.

Sir Cha. You know, Mr Bloomfield, I hate ceremony; madam, your most obedient; for what is past I have not power to offer even an apology. Farewell, and may you be happy as your goodness merits.

(Exit MR BLOOM. and EMMA.)

Enter KILLEAVY.

Well, sir, where have you been?

Kill. Where, sir? Didn't you send me to the lady?

Sir Cha. And have you seen her?

Kill. Faith an I have, sir; she was waiting for me an hour after I got to the place; and, to my great joy, the very identical tame wild duck, that has so often

given us the slip. O she is the sort—she is the prettiest—

Sir Cha. Where is she?

Kill. Sir, the moment I saw her I cou'dn't help looking at her—by the—She is the prettiest—she is all the style—she—

Sir Cha. But where is she?

Kill. She—a—I was completely blind, cou'd see nothing while I was looking at her, for she quite fill'd my eyes.

Sir Cha. Well, sir, and where—

Kill. Well, sir, she bid me call a coach, which I did in a minute without saying a word, handed her in, stept up behind, told the man to drive her here, which he did, sir, and while I rapped at the door, she spoke to him, and off he drove as if the devil was in him.

Sir Cha. And why didn't you pursue, rascal?

Kill. I did pursue the rascal, sir, and roar'd, Stop thief! I was amazed at her going away after behaving so civil to me, and done all in my power to overtake her, but it was not to be done.

Sir Cha. To let her escape when you had her so completely in your power, as the coach must—

Kill. I cou'dn't help it, sir; will you only consider, the horses had eight feet, and I had but two.

Sir Cha. 'Sdeath, villain, you have been drinking!

Kill. Oh, yes, the villain did drive as if he had been drinking.

Sir Cha. When I depended on you, to think of your getting in such a state; but I discharge you from this hour.

Kill. Who me? Upon my soul, sir, I——

Sir Cha. Leave me this moment, sirrah!

Kill. I can't sir; it's impossible: Get your estate, and then discharge me as soon as you please; we've shared good fortune together, and bad shall never part us.

Sir Cha. Insolent scoundrel, I command you to trouble me no more.

Kill. Scoundrel!—

Sir Cha. Yes, sirrah, deliver up your charge, and never let me see your face.

Kill. Scoundrel!—You have wounded me in the tenderest part, “the heart that loved you, and wou’d have followed you in beggary through the world;”—but I am off my charge—there is—no, I’ll say nothing about wages, for I know there are two things we can’t do—he can’t pay, and I can’t ask.—Here, sir, is—I wish to avoid giving you uneasiness; but since we are to part, I feel bound to return every thing that belongs to you. Here are a number of tradesmen’s bills; you’ll find a receipt to the shoemaker’s, and some others, that I paid out of the board-wages I never received. Since I have been with him I have “lived like the camel, on the solid air.” Here are a parcel of new tooth-picks; but these are furniture we neither of us have much use for. There’s some protests from notaries, and a few copies of writs; I leathered the fellows that brought ’em, and wou’dn’t take them in; but there they are. I didn’t wish to distress your mind, so would not shew them. Now, sir, farewell—but consider, sir, pray was it any wonder, Miss Will-o’-th’-Wisp should distance me with such a weight as all that about my—
(*Laying his hand on his heart.*)

Sir Cha. Begone, sir; I’ll send you your wages, you shall no longer impose on my credulity.

Kill. Impose!—I can lay my hand on my heart, and say I never imposed on you, sir; I wish all men going out of place could say the same by their superiors.
(*Exit.*)

Sir Cha. Damnation! Was ever mortal born to suffer as I am; but intrigues, honourable or dishonourable, fashionable or unfashionable, I from this

hour bid adieu to. My privilege shall no longer be my protection—I'll mortify for the advantage of my creditors, and redeem my estate by marrying the widow—I'll go this minute, make her a formal, serious offer, and then adieu for ever to Mis Fly-away. D—mn——No, bless her—bless her—ten thousand blessings on her, and on the whole sex—They are lovely—all divine—all charming. Miss Emma Hale is lovely—little Fly-away's divine—Lady Supple—Oh! she is the devil. *(Exit,*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

A Chamber in LADY SUPPLE'S House.

Enter DASH, meeting TIM.

Tim. A letter for your honour.

Dash. (Reads.) “I have filed another bill, and proceedings are going forward with the greatest success and rapidity”—Huzza! law for ever! “I am concerned in so many expensive cases, that I must request you'll send me instantly 200 pounds, or we are ruined, our cause is lost. Your's, faithfully,
“CAPIUS DEMUR.”

Stifle me, what's this?

Tim. A letter sure, sir. I just brought it to you ;
ecod, this place is turning young master's brain.

(*Aside.*

Dash. Why, he promised to do all without any trouble or expence to me, and asked only half of what he gained. I gave him every guinea I had this morning, and now he sends for more. What shall I do? I am completely stiver-cramp'd; not a face about me, but the one I look through.

Tim. Troth'en, maister, you'd best come and live in my country, where 'tis the fashion for people to look through their own faces.

Dash. Get away, sirrah ! Do you think I'd go and live in your damned country—leave my lawyer and my Chancery suit?

Tim. You'd better leave him the Chancery suit, or may be he'll soon leave you without even my livery suit.

Dash. Pho ! pho ! you don't understand—he's to give me possession of all my estate. I must away to him. But hold ! if I leave the house, my aunt's new husband may—I'll bar that—the servants are all my friends, I'll leave them in trust for me—possession is nine points of the law, and that I'll keep—Tim, desire Rummer the butler, and all the servants, to come here directly.

Tim. Yes, sir.

(*Exit.*

Dash. I'll leave these fellows in charge for me, whilst I go to Demur—(*Looking at the letter.*) 200*l.* Stifle me if I know where to get 200 pence, except from him—the law and the lawyers must do all for me.

Re-enter TIM, RUMMER, Coachman, Footman, two others, &c.

Serv. Ah ! master Neddy, welcome ! welcome !

Dash. Stop, my boys, I'll tell you, this is my house, the whole property was left in trust for me ;

and now my lady aunt wants to cheat me out of it—but I know it's mine, and, as you are honest fellows, and my particular friends, I give it in charge to you; we'll have open house directly—nothing shall be here but plenty, pleasure, mirth, Burgundy, oceans of stingo and claret, my boys.

Serv. Bravo! master Neddy.

Dash. That's my way—stifle me—the bells shall ring—the fiddles play, trumpets sound—drums beat, and the house shall be in an uproar; I'll have money to keep a jubilee all my life—the cellar shall be left open—Butler, you shall throw away your keys, and, cook, you shall sleep with your knife in your hand.

Foot. You are a charming gentleman to talk this way to your servants.

Rum. He, Lord love him! he has no more pride than one of us out of place.

Dash. Pride! not I—Stifle me, I detest it—Now, my boys, only take care of the house in my absence, and I'll provide for you all. As for you, Rummer, you shall be my steward directly. I'm only going to my lawyer, and shall be back directly. What a capital fellow this law-suit will make me! (*Going.*)

Tim. Master Neddy, master Neddy—you never told me what you'd make of me. What shall I be?

Cook. No, sir, nor you hav'n't said what I shou'd be?

Serv. No, nor I, sir?

Dash. You! Oh, stifle me, don't be particular; you shall all have places when I'm a great man, if I don't forget, as great men generally do. [*Exit.*]

[*Servants all following him huzzaing, except TIM.*]

Enter SALLY.

Sal. For Heaven's sake, what is the meaning of all this noise? my lady is almost distracted.

Tim. So is my master.

Sal. My lady vows he shall quit this house di-

rectly : she expects company that must not be disturbed, therefore prepare to be setting off.

Tim. Setting off! Where, Mrs Flounce?

Sal. Oh! no matter where, so the house is rid of such lumber.

Tim. I shall be very sorry when the lawyer men turn you all out, for sure you and I would be very agreeable.

Sal. What?

Tim. You and I would agree the best in the world.

Sal. Asunder it must be then. No, no, Mr Killevy is the lad that can be agreeable and attentive; and to be sure there is one way, and only one, that you can ever hope to gain my affections; if you will oblige me in that one particular, I think I should love you immensely ever after.

Tim. I'll do it, let it be what it will.

Sal. Why I want the glory of having somebody die for the love of me. It's what I have heard a great deal of talk about, but never experienced it. I do think I should be most prodigiously fond of a man that loved me enough to hang or drown himself for my sake?

Tim. Eh?—What?—You'd love a man that wou'd kill himself for your sake.

Sal. Yes, dearly—I'd adore him!

Tim. What, for shooting himself?

Sal. Yes, thou dear fellow—shooting will be still more genteel. I'll borrow you a pistol. And, oh! Tim, Tim, how I shall cry and lament you, and say, Oh! the dear, delightful fellow! Oh! Oh! Oh!

Tim. I'm very much obliged to you—I cou'dn't think of giving you so much trouble, for I should be sorry to make any one that loves me cry. I'd rather make 'em laugh: so, do you see, I don't think nature ever intended me for a dear delightful fellow.

Sal. And you won't?

Tim. I'd rather not.

Sal. What, shrink when you've such an opportu-

nity of immortalizing yourself, to be sung about in ballads, to be quoted when you're in the grave.

Tim. I'd sooner be coated out of the grave, ay, and I'd rather people should say, Timothy Thick-ness was cowardly enough to refuse killing himself to oblige his sweetheart, than, Here lies the brave fellow who shot himself through the head for love of the beautiful Miss Sally Flounce.

Sal. Oh very well, sir.—Leave the room, nor never dare, or hope, to have a smile from me: I wonder how I could lose my time with such a ninny-hammer.

Tim. To be sure, I may be a ninny-hammer, or a yellow-hammer, but I'd rather live two days in this world, bad as it is, than be sung about in ballads for a hundred years: so your servant; I'll warrant I'll find a reasonable sweetheart, that won't ask me to undergo any punishment more than marrying her, but be happy and contented with what I can do with her in this life. [Exit.]

Sal. Astonishing! The creature, who this morning appeared to me a downright idiot, is metamorphosed into a sensible being.

Enter KILLEAVY.

Kill. See where she stands.—

“She never told her love, but let revealment, like a worm
i' the mud,
Feed on her damsel's cheek.”——

Sally, my darling, I just called to take leave of you, and tell you my good fortune—I've lost my place.

Sal. Indeed! how came you to lose it?

Kill. I won't own I was discharged. (*Aside.*) Why, like all great politicians, I resigned my appointment, and gave up my salary, when I found I could get nothing by keeping them.

Sal. Oh! then your wages are——

Kill. Why I can't exactly tell how much they'll

Sal. Then, as you have no money, nor place, and that you despair, may be you'd die for love of me.

Kill. Have a little patience, and if I live long enough this way, I'll die for hunger; and to shew how I love you, I'll commission you as a friend when I'm gone, to make your fortune by publishing all the bad things I've done, by way of an apology for my life. It's all the fashion now.

Sal. Will you marry me?

Kill. Why I love you so well, I'd marry you and twenty like you, if I had enough to make you comfortable in the misery that I must bring on you. Oh, you crator, "Can'st thou bear cold and hunger; can these limbs, framed for the tender offices of love, endure the pleasing pipe of smarting poverty? When"—

Enter SIR CHARLES.

Sir Cha. Ha! my little sprightly! What, Kill-leavy, are you there, my honest fellow?

Kill. No, sir, I am not, nor ever will be your honest fellow,

"While memory holds a seat within this horrid, headless trunk."

Sir Cha. I have been betrayed by passion—I am in your debt—I've given—

Kill. That you have, given me a receipt in full—Scoundrel—

"Words would but wrong the gratitude I owe you."

Sir Cha. I know your disposition too well to ask you to return to my—but pray oblige me, and go directly to Mr Bloomfield's; you'll hear of something there to your advantage.

Kill. I thank you, sir; I'll go this instant, and though I'll never serve you as long as I live, I'd lose my life with pleasure for you, if I could afterwards see you possessed of your fortune. [Exit.]

Sir Cha. Can I speak to your lady? Is your goddess visible?

Sal. No, sir, she is not—she won't be at home this day to any living creature, except Sir Rakeish Spangle.

Sir Cha. Confound this little body, I thought we had lost him. It's an age since I've seen him.

Sal. He has written to my lady, that he means this day to wait on her, and have her final determination.

Sir Cha. The devil! What can she discover in him, to be partial to a little——

Sal. Sir, I cannot bear to hear him disparaged in such a manner. He is a gentleman, sir, and knows how to gain a lady's favour, sir.

Sir Cha. Then pr'ythee tell me how he has completely gained your favour, and why you seem so much my enemy?

Sal. Enemy, sir! lord, sir! really, sir, I am nobody's enemy; but when gentlemen behave like gentlemen, and act with elegance, as a body may say, why 'tis impossible not to treat them like what they are, and throw in a favourable word with one's lady, which I do for Sir Rakeish, because he is a generous, accomplished, thoughtful, attentive, clever, encouraging, well-disposed, pretty youth; and as to my lady, she is not at home, nor won't be at home, for she has a thousand engagements to-day, to-morrow, the next day, the day after; so that 'tis impossible to say whether she'll ever be at home again or not.

Sir Cha. Bless me, child! I'm sorry to see you so ill.

Sal. I'm very well, sir, but my lady——

Sir Cha. Never saw more desperate symptoms; but don't be alarmed: I've got a medicine about me——

Sal. A medicine for what?

Sir Cha. To cure talkativeness : look here ; this is the first potion I'll administer. (*Shewing a purse.*)

Sal. Lord, sir, is that dose pretty strong ?

Sir Cha. Yes, and there is a possibility of its being repeated. It contains ten pills made up of pure gold ; five pennyweights eight grains each.

Sal. Lord, how lucky to meet so learned a physician ! I never could bear doctor's stuff of any kind, but I'll venture to take this. (*Puts it in her pocket.*) It's down—a—the—Lord, sir, I beg pardon. I believe I was indisposed, but your prescription has effectually cured me.

Sir Cha. What have you to say of——

Sal. Not a word, sir ; you've deprived me of the power of speech. When I hear his name mentioned, I conceit I have got a locked jaw.

Sir Cha. Take care he does not find a key to open your lock-jaw ; for here he comes, dressed like an emperor.

Sal. Then, sir, I must fly to tell my lady. I heartily wish you success ;—like a modern elector, I have sold my interest to both parties, and now determine not to vote for either. (*Aside, and exit.*)

Enter MISS RUSSEL, dressed as SIR RAKEISH SPANGLE.

Ha ! Sir Charles Leslie ! in any other place I should have been rejoiced to see you.

Sir Cha. Sir Rakeish, your most obedient ; you still lay siege to her ladyship. I hoped you had considered the superiority of my claim : you know I courted her long before you knew her.

Miss Rus. Why—a—that's very true ; but then, without vanity, I believe I may affirm, I stepped further into her favour at first sight, than you have reached for many months ; you know I can't help it if the lady will love me, poor thing.

Sir Cha. You have for some time crossed my ad-

dresses : if you don't desist, I shall expect proper satisfaction.

Miss Rus. Sir Charles, I have crossed your addresses, and mean to give you proper satisfaction at a proper time.

Enter MR HALE.

Oh ! you are come most fortunately, Mr Hale ; Sir Charles seems resolved to have the widow, right or wrong, contrary to her own inclinations and our pretensions.

Mr H. To be sure I can't dance, cock my hat, sing an opera air, repeat soft lines, and swear a thousand false oaths ; but what o' that ? her ladyship is a woman of understanding : it must be substance and merit, both in purse and person, that will persuade her. I'm strong and hearty, sound, wind and limb ; here is persuasion from head to foot. I am Lady Supple's choice.

Enter LADY SUPPLE.

Miss Rus. So looked the Paphian Goddess, when rising from the sea, and with such ecstasy the god of war flew from the field to her embrace.

Sir Cha. That flight exceeds all the lies I ever told her. *(Aside.*

Mr H. I shou'd have thought him nearer the mark to have said, "so Vulcan looked when coming from his forge, and I am Venus in breeches flying to his embrace." *(Aside.*

Sir Cha. But this young gentleman shall not carry matters so. Your ladyship's humble servant.

L. Sup. Ah ! Sir Charles Leslie ! Mr Hale too, I protest. I beg pardon, but the attraction of Sir Rakeish is so powerful, I really did not see you, gentlemen.

Mr H. Your ladyship may please your eye with a fair appearance, a kickshow, a mere puffed paste, a

whipp'd trifle ; but, madam, consider, I have an hundred thousand pounds in my pocket : stock in abundance : no mortgage on my person or estate : both free from incumbrances, as this indenture witnesseth.

Sir Cha. Tempting offers you have made—Stock ! the lady can't converse with your stock, drink tea with your stock, go to the opera with your stock, dance——

Miss Rus. No, sir, a young fellow's worth a million of your stock. I am your rival. Look at me. I hope I make a better figure than a bundle of tallies, or a roll of orders.

Mr H. Not you, indeed : They are of value ; but such a thing as thee—Here's English oak, an hundred years a growing, an hundred in perfection, and an hundred decaying—You'll allow, younker, that I am something more of a man than you are.

Miss Rus. Yes, I allow you are much older—Pray, ma'am, do you like a man the better for being old ? ha, ha !

Mr H. But, madam, I am no rake, no libertine—your hours of rest shall never be broken by me.

Sir Cha. No, that I'll be sworn they won't.

Mr H. I don't employ my money in paying tailors for fantastic habits ; my back shall never be a foundation for tradesmen to erect summer-houses.

Miss Rus. How can you listen to him, ma'am ? the old wicked deceiver !

Mr H. I a wicked deceiver :—Ma'am, do I look like a deceiver ? Sir, my reputation's too firmly established to be hurt by your raillery. I am a man of integrity, and confine my addresses to this lady only ; think of no other, admire no other, love no other, and can be made happy by no other.

Miss Rus. Sly sinner ! Ah ! you wicked devil !—What, and you this morning had not an interview with an artless, foolish girl ? you made her no offer, no presents ?—“ The sweets of lilies, jessamin, and roses,

dwell on those lips.—Were I possessed of Ovid's softness, I shou'd want art to tell the vastness of my passion."—Has he ever uttered raptures like these to your ladyship?

L. Sup. Never that I recollect.

Mr H. No, nor any one else—it's all his own invention, my lady.

Miss Rus. Invention! Now, madam, hear a most solemn repetition of his own words: "Till now my chief and only bliss was wealth; but you have made me a convert—this purse is yours."

Mr H. Confusion! How the devil should he know all this? (*Aside.*)

Miss Rus. Mine, sir?—your's, is it not, Mr Hale?—"This ring is your's and this Bank bill, were they not all your's? Ha! ha!—give me a smile to live upon."—A lovely fellow to be smiled on.

Mr H. I am thunderstruck, tricked, bubbled, and disappointed; damned jilt, I have not courage to attempt an excuse,—confound it, sir—

Miss Rus. And, sir——

Mr H. I don't understand——

L. Sup. Then I understand you are a wicked old dissembler, and wou'd betray me to misery.

Miss Rus. Yes, and has basely attempted to ruin a woman of virtue.

Sir Cha. And yet, poor devil, he bid high,—'tis pity he shou'd be balked. She was a cruel, hard-hearted baggage to betray you thus.

Mr H. Madam, I shall find a time to justify myself.

L. Sup. Then do it now, before your accuser, or never see me more.

Miss Rus. Ay, now, now or never, what can you say?

Mr H. I say, madam,—Sir,—a—that, as I hope for pardon,—I wish,—I wish,—may misery, plagues, and poverty, seize you altogether! [*Exit.*]

Miss Rus. Ha! ha! ha!—Now, my lady, having defeated the enemy, I shall possess myself of the treasure.

Sir Cha. Hold, hold, sir; you have only routed the advanced guard, the main body continues unshaken. Madam, the attentions I have shewn you, the sincerity with——

Miss Rus. What I am to attack you too? With all my heart—have at you. When you address a person of her ladyship's discerning judgment, you should disengage yourself from all other intrigues whatever, as well as our friend Hale.

L. Sup. Surely, Sir Charles, you cou'd not be so deceit——

Miss Rus. Only a small piece of gallantry to divert himself in your absence or so.

Sir Cha. Hark ye, young gentleman, I desire you'd keep within the bounds of truth and good manners. You hav'n't Mr Hale to deal with now.

Miss Rus. No, I have the free, the gay, the unconfined, inconstant, general lover—did you not this morning protest never to see this lady again—"Psha! hang Lady Supple, she's more disgusting than the friseur's block her head is dressed upon; ay, and more painted."

L. Sup. I painted! compare me to a block!

Sir Cha. Sir, you are——

Miss Rus. You did not find the picture the lady dropt this morning?

L. Sup. A block! From this moment I detest——

Sir Cha. My dear lady, be assured——

Miss Rus. Did you overtake the lady that was insulted here?

L. Sup. Here—under my roof?

Sir Cha. That was a woman, that——

Miss Rus. That you followed in the street, pursued into a house, made love to another lady—an assignation was the result. Mr Bloomfield can witness how

you were tricked there—Have you discovered who the abominable jilt is?

Sir Cha. Very well, and pray are you not ashamed of all this?

L. Sup. I think you shou'd, Sir Charles. I wish you a good day, sir—A block indeed!

Sir Cha. I scorn to intrude, madam; and, notwithstanding all this facetious little gentleman has advanced, I hope to convince you of the very—a—hem!—sincere—affection—I bear you—and——

Miss Rus. A—hem—sincere—Ah! ha!—the block, madam.

Sir Cha. You'd better be quiet, sir.—Ma'am, I—

L. Sup. Compare me to a block!

Sir Cha. Ma'am, ha!—the—this damned block has been the ruin of me. [Exit.

Miss Rus. Victory! victory!—*Veni, vide, vici.* Now your ladyship can't in honour deny me your hand; 'tis the only way you can effectually punish the deceit of such lovers, revenge the affronts they have offered you, and reward my boundless passion.

L. Sup. Laird, you are so young; but then you are so engaging, you can persuade me to any thing. I—a—do consent—I will be yours. There's no denying you.

Miss Rus. O my angel! you've sealed the bond, and from this moment I date my happiness! I have a special licence ready, and the ceremony shall be performed directly.

Welcome, bright joy, to Hymen lead away:

Thus bliss and rapture crown each future day. [Excunt.

SCENE II.

A Hall in MR BLOOMFIELD'S House.

Porter. KILLEAVY enters.

Kill. Sir, your servant.

Por. Your servant. What do you want?

Kill. I want to hear something to my advantage, "for I am fortune's fool."

Por. I know nothing about you : who are you?

Kill. Why, sir, I'm a man of no estate worth mentioning ; for the sea covers half the land that belonged to it, and the tenants can't make the rent of the other half, because it is all covered with stones ; I am only like a great many private gentlemen here, that live on the public ; as a proof of it, I'll treat you to a bottle of wine, if there's a tavern near where you have credit, for the devil a teaster myself has in the world.

Enter Steward, seeing KILLEAVY.

Stew. Oh ! I am glad you are come. Sir Charles Leslie recommended you to my master ; he desired me to hire you immediately, and give you whatever wages you asked. What had you in your last place?

Kill. In my last place, I had—I won't take the same here.

Stew. What had you from your former master?

Kill. Nothing at all. He used me very ill ; he went to bed one night as well as any man in the world, and when he awoke in the morning he found himself stiff dead ; so I'd live with him no longer.

Stew. You've been very unfortunate : but you shall have good wages here. There's a set of new liveries come home—take one of 'em, and get to business directly ; we are to have a great entertainment.

Kill. To be sure this is luck ; I was just going to seek my fortune ; but I did not know where to find it.

Stew. You shou'd have gone abroad.

Kill. I was there before ; in my travels I had a taste for every thing. There's Ratsbone diet—and there's Polish diet ; but the devil a morsel I could find equal to your good old English diet ; and so, sir, if you please to shew me where I am to begin my work, I'll be at it directly, and the only way I wish to go abroad again is to stay at home all the rest of my life.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

Enter MR BLOOMFIELD in full dress, a Gentleman, and Servant.

Bloom. Where is Mr Careful ?

Serv. In his own room, sir.

Bloom. Desire him to bring the money instantly that I ordered. (*Exit Servant.*) The new-married

Lady Supple and her bridegroom appear quite fashionable already—Their's is the shortest honeymoon I ever witnessed.

Enter MRS BLOOMFIELD.

Mrs Bloom. My dear, I wish I cou'd have been with you sooner, but 'twas not in my power.

Enter CAREFUL, the Steward.

Stew. Here is five more, which makes fifteen thousand since dinner, sir.

Bloom. Very well, get the remainder instantly—*(Exit CAREFUL.)* There, sir, is the five thousand, and if you are inclined to pursue madam Fortune, her frowns have not terrified me.

Gent. As you please, sir.

Bloom. With all my heart again, sir, I'll attend you. *(Exit Gent.)*

Mrs Bloom. Fifteen, my dear—have you been playing?

Bloom. Playing! yes, and am delighted—'tis charming—but I must return.

Mrs Bloom. Don't your losses disturb you?

Bloom. Disturb! no! by heaven I'd rather lose ten times the sum than have one sad thought come near my heart.

Mrs Bloom. Say you so? I'll have another carriage to-morrow richly lined, and superbly painted—O that I cou'd get a coronet!—Do try for one. 'Twill be such an addition to you.

Bloom. I don't think so.

Mrs Bloom. What, not better to be a lord than a simple private gentleman?

Bloom. Not in my mind—Interest can make a lord, but it requires merit, manners, and inborn virtue to make a real gentleman. I have given orders, that the four elements shall furnish out the table with

their choicest delicacies—I have summed up my estates, and find we have a twelve-month good yet.

Mrs Bloom. What do you mean?

Bloom. That I had rather be lord of pleasure a single year, than be whole ages consuming what we have in foolish temperance.

Mrs Bloom. You get beyond all bounds!—A year? and what then pray?

Bloom. Why, then retire into the Bench, till my debts are paid by an act of parliament; after that carry a musket, and fight for my king. If the fortune of war shou'd deprive me of a limb, I can end my days in that glorious establishment provided for the brave fellows who are maimed in defending their country.

Mrs Bloom. If you see all this so plainly, why not endeavour to prevent it?

Bloom. No, my dear, 'tis only you that can prevent it.

Mrs Bloom. Me! Do I know your income?—Do you men ever suffer your wives to concern themselves with your estates? You must retrench your own expences—I will not be controled, Mr Bloomfield, that's my resolution. (Exit.

Bloom. But you shall be ruled, that's my resolution.—Since I have found persuasion, good-nature, and indulgence all in vain, this is my last effort, nor can I doubt of its success. (Exit.

SCENE II.

A superb Drawing-room, with an elegant Assemblage, at different Amusements—several Servants attending.

Enter MR HALE from amongst the Company.

Mr H. I have received an invitation from Mr Bloomfield; I shou'd not have accepted it, but to

observe my daughter, for I hear Selby's in town, and to a certainty he'll be of the party ; but I'll watch 'em. In the mean time I may as well take a share of the good things here.

[*Goes to sideboard, looks at labels as choosing his wine. KILLEAVY comes forward dressed in MR BLOOMFIELD's livery, a salver in his hand, in waiting.*]

Kill. Well this is cruel ! I am working hard here upon earth like a collier, or a grave-digger under ground, and I am doing nothing. (*Seeing MR HALE.*) What's this you are at ?

Mr H. At ! Why if you must know, the room is so warm I was going to take a taste of this by way of a cooler.

Kill. A taste of this ! (*Drinks.*) Oh ! for shame, you never can expect to stay here, if you go on this way. (*Drinks.*) Sure this wou'd be the ruin of you (*Drinks.*)—Here's more yet—(*Drinks.*) You look damned bad ; this is the way you are killing yourself. (*Drinks.*)

Mr H. I think it's the way you are killing yourself—you're a strange fellow.

Kill. You're out—I never was more at home in my life.

Mr H. It seems so ; let me have a glass of wine.

Kill. That I will, a dozen, when your business is done ; but come, you shall have one glass to raise your old heart. Here's every thing—what shall I introduce to you ?

Mr H. No matter ; any French wines. They are the coolest.

Kill. French ! No not the devil a sup ; I'll take more care than that of you : Introducing any thing French among us is enough to ruin our constitution.

Mr H. I'm choking, and this fellow keeps prating and drinking. I desire you'll give me a glass of claret this moment.

Kill. To be sure I will—let me look for it—why didn't you say that at first? You shall have plenty of claret, for that's Irish, my Grecian—Here it is. I'll help you, and you shall have a bumper. Here's the land we live in, and I wish I was there with all my heart; O sweet Ireland! (*Slapping his back.*)

Mr H. What do you mean by all this freedom? Pray do you know Mr Hale?

Kill. No, nor I don't desire to know him: He's a spalpeen.—

Mr H. What?

Kill. Why, he's a dirty congrawnaigh! the servants here, "our partners in exile," tell me, Mr Hale comes whenever he's invited. Mr Hale gives more trouble and less money than any one in the house living or dead; they always laugh in Mr Hale's face when they see his back out of the door, for the head of Mr Hale's thirteen was never impudent enough to look at any of us, so I'm sure you'll join with me, in pitching Mr Hale and all such customers to the devil.

Mr H. I'll be damn'd if I do! Why you infamous scoundrel—

Kill. Infamous! infamy on thy head, thou fool of power, thou grander in authority.

Serv. What are you doing to Mr Hale?

Mr H. Doing!

Kill. Why sure that's not Mr Hale?

Serv. I tell you it is.

Kill. Well, listeners never heard good of themselves. He had no business listening to me, when I did not know him. (*Retires up.*)

LADY SUPPLE, dressed, comes forward with a Gentlewoman.

L. Sup. Oh! my dear ma'am, only a few hours married, and do but observe his inhuman negligence, his cruelty, after resigning to him all I was worth in the world—Oh!—

SIR CHARLES comes from amongst the Company.

Sir Cha. Ah, widow, no, bride I mean—Hey-day ! weeping ! I see nature will keep its course ; as man and wife are one flesh, so repentance and matrimony are inseparable.—Why did you credit his assertions ; and refuse with such indignation the offer I made you ?

L. Sup. I am most heartily sorry—Oh !—

Mr H. Ha ! and I am most heartily glad ; give you joy, ma'am, give you joy,—you despised me—I was a wicked old deceiver, and wou'd betray you to misery ; but what cou'd you expect from such a paper-built thing —Why a strong puff of wind wou'd blow him into his original nothingness.—Here he comes—I hope he has not heard me.

MISS RUSSEL comes forward, dressed as before.

Miss Rus. Ha ! Sir Charles, your hand,—give me joy.—Mr Hale, are you there ?—We have been rivals,—no matter—we are now friends.—All is sunshine,—why don't you laugh, my lady ? (*Aside to LADY SUP.*) I shall expect to see you all at my house, where gaiety, festivity, and joy, shall crown the hours—Look good-humour'd, laugh, my adorable dowager. (*Aside to LADY SUP.*)

L. Sup. I can't laugh, but I can cry.—Oh ! Oh !

Miss Rus. There, true wife ; always in opposition with the husband. If I had bid her cry, I'll lay fifty pounds she'd ha' laugh'd.

Sir Cha. Come, sir, you must behave in another manner.

Miss Rus. Sir, she's mine—who dares interfere between a man and his wife ?

Sir Cha. Her estate shall be taken care of.

Miss Rus. That I'm in possession of, and all her bank notes, writings, bonds, and leases. (*To a Servant.*) Desire one of my footmen to step home, and

bid Flounce instantly bring the seal'd box of papers that's in her lady's chamber—(*Exit Servant.*) I am lord of her, and all she's worth.

Sir Cha. You are a fine pert little fellow—Pray, sir, after all, who the devil are you?

Miss Rus. A gentleman.

Sir Cha. Of what estate?

Miss Rus. None, but what this lady through her bounty has bestow'd on me.

L. Sup. Oh! Oh! Oh! what will become of me?

Miss Rus. I'll tell you—You shall retire into Wales, and live comfortably among the mountains on the fifty pounds a year, which my unbounded generosity shall settle on you for life.

L. Sup. If we must separate, let me know your conditions.

Miss Rus. I shall be moderate in the extreme, but for worlds I will not deviate from what I now propose.—I shall only demand out of the entire property, twenty thousand pounds, and the mortgage you have upon this gentleman's estate.

(*Pointing to SIR CHARLES.*)

Sir Cha. The mortgage on me!—Sir, you and I must meet, and—

Miss Rus. With all my heart, sir; when I have settled this affair, I am your's, when and where you please.

Enter SALLY, with a small box.

Sal. A servant came for this box; but, as I know your ladyship always kept papers of the utmost consequence in it, I wou'dn't venture to trust it with him.

Miss Rus. You were right: stay a moment, and you may take it back. (*Unlock the box.*) Here, my lady, it shall be your own act and deed,—your own free gift.

Sir Cha. Surely your ladyship won't yield me up a sacrifice to one that has no regard to honour.

L. Sup. I wou'd preserve you, Sir Charles, but it is not in my power; I must prevent my own total ruin.—Here is the mortgage!

Sir Cha. Confusion.

L. Sup. And there's the twenty thousand pounds in bank bills. I hope you are satisfied?

Miss Rus. Perfectly, and exonerate you from every engagement.—You on your part agree never to molest me for what you have now frankly given?

L. Sup. I do.

Miss Rus. Then I take my leave.

Sir Cha. By Heavens, sir, you shall take my life, before you take that mortgage out of this house.—Draw, sir.

Miss Rus. What, before the ladies? Quarrel where you are sure to be parted. (*Aside.*) What shall I do? the discovery, whenever it occurs, shall be my own voluntary act, I'm determined.

Sir Cha. I'll perish before I suffer myself to be in the power of such a villain. Relinquish that mortgage, or one of us dies this moment.

Miss Rus. Well, since you are determined on an engagement with me, rely on it, you'll not find me the lad, the stripling you think—By all—but there is no need of passion—Let me tell you, you don't know who you have to deal with—I am a person of property—You don't imagine I am to risque my life in a moment, and leave my affairs at sixes and sevens—I must make my will in case of an accident: Flounce, do you come and witness it.—I'll be with you in a few minutes, sir, d—mn me if I don't.

(*Exit SALLY, following.*)

Sir Cha. There's a little rascal—he certainly meditates some act of villainy against me; but I'll watch him—he sha'n't escape, I'm resolved.—Was ever mortal so tormented! Distressed in circumstances—

wretched in my love—Oh! that obdurate little Fly-away! I fear I shall see her no more—No more be blessed with her agreeable prattle—Never have the pleasure of almost losing my breath in pursuit of her, the delight of looking like a fool, the felicity of being badgered by a coxcomb, and turned out by an ugly old woman. Oh! cruel, unkind, hard-hearted woman, to deprive me of all this comfort!

(Goes up the stage.)

Enter MRS BLOOMFIELD.

Mrs Bloom. The more I think, the more dreadful it appears. Poverty, shame, and reproach will soon overtake us.—To live here in town is delightful—the place where all pleasures flow; but how shall I enjoy those pleasures—oh no,—’tis paying slow years of repentance for hasty moments that fly so fast, they stay not to be welcomed.

MR BLOOMFIELD comes from the Company.

Bloom Well, my dear, is not this charming?—now we are both pleased, and may our happiness never know a change.

Enter CAREFUL.

Care. All’s done, as you commanded, sir; but with much difficulty, and a large premium, I raised the money.

Bloom. Oh! no matter so I have to pay my losses.

Enter Father and BLOOMFIELD Jun.

Fath. My dear children, it grieves my old heart to mention any thing that can damp your joy, but there are at this moment three executions in your house.

Mrs Bloom. Heavens!

Bloom. Don’t be alarmed, love. Sell that manor

which is your ladyship's jointure. (*Exit CAREFUL.*)
You have no objection, my dear?

Mrs Bloom. No—never shall I object to any thing you think right.

Bloom. It's unavoidable.

Fath. Good heaven! is it come to so low an ebb already?—Oh, 'tis not to be supported—To prevent such acute misery to my latter days, there is but one way, that is, at this instant to bid you eternally adieu.

Bloom. My father, whither wou'd you go?

Fath. Attempt not to stop me—Farewell.—I take my final leave. Adieu, my child.

(*Embraces the boy.*)

Bloom. Thou shalt not go, unfriended and unfurnished.

Mrs Bloom. No, by no means: If you will leave us, take something to guard you from necessity.

Fath. What! think you I'll give speed to your misfortunes, and by depriving you of some of that little you have left, invite ruin to fall on you a day sooner—no, no. (*Going.*)

Bloom. If not from us, take from your darling boy—Here, sir, give these to your grandfather, and say, when they are gone, you'll again supply him.

(*Gives him two bank notes.*)

Boy. Here, dear papa, take this. (*Giving one.*)

Fath. From the child, it is——

Bloom. That—why not both, sir?—Is this your gratitude, your love?

Boy. Oh! though I love him very well, I love you too, and so I'll keep this (the other note) until I'm a man, and my wife's extravagance makes you go away from me, then I'll give it to support you.

Fath. Oh! my dear child! (*Embraces him.*) Thy innocent prattle has afforded a lesson that—reflect on his words, my children: I know the purity of your minds; should a reformation be the happy result, in

what tranquillity and content shall I close the scene of life in the society of you and my dear boy.

(Retires up with the boy.)

Mrs Bloom. Reproach from my infant ! my husband's aged father threaten to fly from us ! sell my jointure ! then misery is inevitable. *(Aside.)*

Bloom. What ! grave and thoughtful in the midst of all you can desire ?

Mrs Bloom. Really, my dear, I begin to be tired of the formality of paying and receiving visits ; with all this bustle, there's little society, and, I fear, less sincerity—say, that to-morrow you'll accompany me to our villa, and bid adieu to all this folly and dissipation—you sha'n't deny me.

Bloom. My dear, I have a thousand engagements that can't be dispensed with—then I must to Bath, Brighton, and Newmarket, where I have horses to run, and from the bets already made, I must win or lose considerably.

Mrs Bloom. I can contain myself no longer, but on my knees entreat you'd summon all your reason, and with tender patience hear me.

Bloom. Rise, my dear ; I cannot bear to see you in this posture. What wou'd you say ?

Mrs Bloom. I'd warn you of the precipice before you. If you advance, we are both inevitably lost—think when you have sold all, how dreadful it must be to be driven out by rude hands, and the severer law, to be forced to labour for our bread, be scorned by strangers, slighted by friends, receive an alms given with a severe rebuke for our past follies, which will be yet more bitter than want itself, and we must endure it, for the fallen wretch that will not cringe for support, may linger in poverty without pity or relief.—Frugality may yet retrieve our sinking fortune—let me beseech you retire into the country, for I am now convinced, that where innocence inhabits, there content is only to be found.

Bloom. Be it as you please; I can't refuse, when you thus tenderly entreat.

Mrs Bloom. Then I am blessed! kind Providence has saved me from the brink of ruin, and restored me once more to every earthly happiness.

SIR CHARLES comes forward.

Sir Cha. My gentleman within here takes a long time in settling his affairs.

MR HALE comes forward with EMMA, SELBY following.

Sel. Only suffer me to explain, sir—

Mr Hale. Explain, sir, what business you have with my daughter?

Sir Cha. Your daughter, and this the gentleman!—yes, I see it is—I'm sorry for the confusion I occasioned, and—come, come, do give your daughter to this man of worth and mettle.

Mr H. Is it the right sort of mettle? Is he a man of fortune?

Sir Cha. He's a man of honour, that's better; and, from my friend Bloomfield's account, possesses truth, justice, and integrity: those articles you don't always find about men of fortune.

Mr H. Well, as his patron, Lord Wealthy, has got him a company, and is so firmly his friend, why I'll be his friend too, and tell him his father in the hour of death entreated I would give him my daughter; made me his executor, and left ten thousand pounds to his boy George. The will and cash I secreted: now I'll produce 'em; give 'em to you with all my heart, and my dear girl's hand into the bargain—there—I am easier now than I have been since I took charge of your property.

Sel. Oh! give me joy, for—

Enter DASH, very shabbily dressed.

Dash. No, no, give me joy—give me joy, I have got it—give me joy, I have got it.

Sir Cha. Got it! Got what? And why is all this joy?

Dash. I have got my fortune—Well, aunt! What! have you heard the news? you seem down in the mouth; you may fret, but you can't blame me for getting what's my own.

Sir Cha. I rather think, from your present appearance, you've lost what was your own: when last I had the honour of seeing you, I observed a diamond ring, pin, large buckles, two watches—

Dash. Oh! they are all gone: they and my wardrobe went to raise money for the counsel, and to carry on the suit. These clothes were lying by, so I just put them on for convenience, having no others. I shall now blaze forth with more splendour than ever, stifle me, eh, old one? I told you I'd make you stare; how damned mad they are at my good fortune!

Enter Servant.

Serv. Two men, who followed Mr Dash into the hall, desired me to give him this. [Exit.]

Dash. Oh! 'tis from my friend Mr Demur—let me see—(*Reads.*) “Sir, every thing being now finally adjusted”—Bravo! I suppose here follows a draft on his banker—Law for ever—“and your part of the property producing only two thousand pounds, you now remain indebted to me the sum of six hundred and seventy-three pounds sixteen shillings and eight-pence. Your paying the bearer instantly will prevent his executing the writ he has against you, and the uneasiness which your going to prison must occasion in the breast of,—yours, Capius Demur, uneas-pris.”—What the devil is all this?

Sir Cha. 'Tis your good fortune, which we all envy so much.

Dash. Well, but stifle me, if ever I thought of this. A prison!—is that the great house he promised to give me possession of?

Mr H. Hold, young man; sometimes out of evil good will arise. My design on this lady's person and property made me attentive to all the proceedings of your lawyer, by which I shall be enabled to free you from the gripe of a scoundrel, and put you in possession of what is really yours.

Dash. Strike me crooked, but you are a good one! You'll get me my own! take my advice though, and don't go to law! stifle me, if ever I go to law while I breathe.

Sir Cha. What, not to recover your right, sir?

Dash. No, sir; for there's no such thing as right in law, I think.

Sir Cha. Don't mistake, sir, you have only to lament that you have fallen into bad hands: your agent was dishonest.—English laws, like English liberty, properly treated, are our greatest blessings; they were established on the noblest basis, to protect us from oppression, and are the chief supporters of our glorious constitution.

Miss Rus. (Within.) Is Sir Charles Leslie there? I suppose by his patience he has thought better of the affair.

Sir Cha. My patience! You requested time, and I have granted it. Come forth thou——

Miss Rus. I will, and I hope you have spirit to meet me.

Sir Cha. You shall feel whether I have spirit or not.

Mr H. No, no, though he is a little impudent—

Enter SALLY, dressed as SIR RAKEISH.

Hey-day! why this is Sally.

Sir Cha. Sally!

Sal. Yes, I am Sally, sir, at your service——

(*Curtsies.*)

Sir Cha. Where is this impostor, this coward? I'll make him an example. I'll sacrifice him to——

Sal. Oh! dear sir, don't hurt him, poor sweet gentleman, if you had seen him throw himself on his knees to me, and cry, O, my dear Mrs Sally, you and only you can save my life, says he. Sir, says I, I'd have you to know I am a very honest—O, nonsense, says he—Ho, sir, 'tis not nonsense, says I, and I vow I'll cry out. Will you have me, says he? No, I won't, says I. Only let me tell you what I want, says he. I know what you want well enough, says I. So then, with all the civility and all the modesty in the world, says he, here is a purse of guineas, if you'll save my life by exchanging clothes with me. Oh, sir, who could refuse a pretty young fellow and a purse of guineas.

Sir Cha. Ah, the coward!

Sal. So I did, sir. Go boldly out, says he—Sir Charles will follow, and then I can escape. Oh, sir, for all your passion, if you'd ha' seen him as I saw him, you'd have done more than that for him.

Sir Cha. His impositions shall now be checked. I am the instrument that must punish thee, thou wretch, nor think that any disguise shall shield thee from——

Enter MISS RUSSEL, in SALLY's clothes.

Miss Rus. Truth and honour shall shield me. To my disguise I bid adieu. It has answered every purpose I wished; first, through it I have obtained 20,000 l. my own just patrimony; then knowing your mortgage was gained by extortion, I made bold to get that, and justice points you out as the right owner of it.

(*Gives a bond to SIR CHA.*)

Sir Cha. Generous, charming woman!—share it

with me. License my honourable passion, and give me leave to love.

Miss Rus. O, Sir Charles! he that will love, and knows what it is to love, will ask no leave of any but himself—there's my fortune—there's my hand, and with those be satisfied—you have long possessed my heart.

Sir Cha. Bloomfield, ma'am, Selby—rejoice—ay, and Lady Supple shall be happy : whatever your late husband's fair demands on my estate may have been shall be discharged most faithfully.

L. Sup. I ask no more. To your agency, Mr Hale, I commit my property, and desire to retain only what is truly mine.

Fath. (*Comes forward.*) I see you amidst your friends; may I venture to say, I participate in your return to happiness?

Mrs Bloom. You may, sir.—To-morrow we shall retire into the country, where to see this company must be a gratification as often as our shattered fortune will allow.

Bloom. Our fortune is not shattered, not even hurt—my excesses have been all pretended; they were put on to awaken in your mind——

Mrs Bloom. And it has most effectually—Your conduct was so clear a mirror of my own, that 'twas impossible not to see and blush at my glaring improprieties : but we will advert to the past only to make permanent our present felicity.—I will discard the sycophants that used to surround me ; I will associate only with the virtuous, and never will I suffer cunning villainy to sit at my feast, while innocent honesty perishes at my door.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

THE
CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS.

A
COMEDY,
IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRE-ROYAL, HAY-MARKET.

BY
MISS LEE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LORD GLENMORE,	<i>Mr Bensley.</i>
GOVERNOR HARCOURT,	<i>Mr Wilson.</i>
WOODVILLE, <i>only Son to my</i>	} <i>Mr Palmer.</i>
<i>Lord,</i>	
CAPTAIN HARCOURT, <i>Nephew</i>	} <i>Mr Bannister, Jun.</i>
<i>to both,</i>	
GREY, <i>an infirm Clergyman,</i>	<i>Mr Aickin.</i>
VANE, <i>Valet to Lord Glenmore,</i>	<i>Mr La Mash.</i>
JACOB, <i>Servant to Cecilia,</i>	<i>Mr Edwin.</i>
CECILIA, <i>Mistress to Woodville,</i>	<i>Miss Farren.</i>
MISS MORTIMER, <i>Ward to</i>	} <i>Mrs Cuyler.</i>
<i>Lord Glenmore,</i>	
WARNER, <i>Housekeeper to</i>	} <i>Mrs Love.</i>
<i>Lord Glenmore,</i>	
BRIDGET, <i>Maid to Cecilia,</i>	<i>Mrs Wilson.</i>

SCENE—London.

Time, Twenty-four hours.

THE
CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A Hall.

Enter VANE in a riding dress, and a Footman.

Vane. Run, and tell Mrs Warner my lord is at hand ; and bid the butler send me a bottle of hock. — (*Throws himself along the hall chairs, wiping his forehead.*) Phew ! the months have jumbled out of their places, and we have July in September !

Enter MRS WARNER.

War. Servant, Mr Vane.

Vane. Ah ! my dear creature ! how have you done these fifty ages ?

War. Why, methinks you are grown mighty grand, or you would have come to the still-room to ask. Will you choose any chocolate ?

Vane. Why, don't you see I am dead?—absolutely dead; and, if you was to touch me, I should shake to mere dust, like an Egyptian mummy.—Because it was not provoking enough to lounge away a whole summer in the country, here am I driven up to town, as if the devil was at my heels, in the shape of our hopeful heir; who has neither suffered my lord nor me to rest one moment, through his confounded impatience to see his uncle.

War. Umph!—he'll have enough of the old gentleman presently. He is the very moral of my poor dear lady, his sister, who never was at peace herself, nor suffered any one else to be so. Such a house as we have had ever since he came!—Why, he is more full of importance and airs than a bailiff in possession: and hectors over Miss Mortimer, till she almost keeps her chamber to avoid him.

Vane. Hates Miss Mortimer!—Why, here'll be the devil to pay about her, I suppose!

War. Hate her? ay, that he does. He look'd as if he could have kill'd her the moment she came down to see him; and got into his chamber presently after, where he sends for me.—Who is this young woman, Mrs What's your name? says he. Why, sir, says I, she is the orphan of a Colonel Mortimer, whose intimacy with my lord, says I——Pho, pho, says he, all that I know, woman—What does she do in this house? says he, his face wrinkling all over, like cream when it's skimming. Why, sir, says I, her father unluckily died just before the duke his brother, and so could not leave her one shilling of all that fine fortune; and so my lord intends to marry her to Mr Woodville, says I.—He does? cries he; Heaven be praised, I'm come in time to mar that dainty project, however. You may go, woman, and tell Miss I don't want any thing more to-night.—So up goes I to Miss Mortimer, and tells her

all this. Lord ! how glad she was, to find he intended to break the match, though she can't guess what he means.

Vane. Upon my soul, I think it is full as hard to guess what she means. What the devil, will not my lord's title, fortune, and only son, be a great catch for a girl without a friend or a shilling ?

War. Ay ; but I could tell you a little story would explain all.—You must know——(*Sitting down ; a loud knocking.*)

Vane. (*Starts up.*) Zounds, here's my lord !

[*Exeunt confusedly.*]

SCENE II.

An Antichamber.

LORD GLENMORE and the Governor meet ; the latter hobbling.

Ld Glen. You are welcome to England, brother ! I am sorry your native air pays you so ill a compliment after sixteen years absence.

Gov. Faith, my lord, and so am I too, I promise you : I put up with these things tolerably well in the Indies ; I did not go there to be happy ; but, after all my labours, to find I have just got the money when it is out of my power to enjoy it, is a cursed stroke :—like a fine ship of war, I am only come home to be dismasted and converted into an hospital. However, I am glad you hold it better : I don't think you look'd as well when we parted. My sister, poor Susan ! she is gone too :—well, we can

never live a day the longer for thinking on't. Where's Frank? Is he still the image of his mother?

Ld Glen. Just as you left him, but that the innocence of the boy is dignified by the knowledge of the man.

Gov. He will hardly remember his old uncle!—I did love the rogue, that's the truth on't: and never look'd at my money-bags but I thought of him. However, you have provided him a wife!

Ld Glen. I have; you saw her on your arrival, I suppose, for I left her in town to attend a sick aunt. Poor Mortimer! he died one month before the duke his brother, and missed a fine title and estate. You know how I loved the honest fellow, and cannot wonder I took home his orphan'd daughter, as a match for Woodville.

Gov. Brother, brother, you are too generous! it is your foible, and artful people know how to convert it to their own advantage.

Ld Glen. It is, if a foible, the noblest incident to humanity. Sophia has birth, merit, accomplishments, and wants nothing but money to qualify her for any rank.

Gov. Can she have a worse want on earth? Birth, merit, accomplishments, are the very things that render money more essential; if she had been brought up in a decent plain way indeed,—but she has the airs of a peccress already; and if any philosopher doubts of the perpetual motion, I would advise him to watch the knocker of your house. Then you have, out of your precise decorums, removed your son, to make way for this flirt of fashion; and what is the consequence of rendering him thus early his own master?

Ld Glen. If you run on thus, only to divert yourself, with all my heart; but if you would throw a real imputation on Miss Mortimer's conduct, she is

entitled to my serious defence. I never saw any good arise from secluding young people ; and authorise Woodville and Sophia to live with that innocent elegance, which renders every rank easy, and prevents pleasure from seducing the heart, or ignorance the senses.

Gov. My lord, I am amazed at you ! Was there ever yet a woman who didn't mean to pass for a goddess ? Do they not gain upon us continually, till nothing of our prerogative remains but the name ? We are wise fellows truly, if we do not keep down this humour of their's as long as possible, by breeding them in retirement. Every tinsel fop will find address enough to convince a wife she is an angel ; and the husband must be lucky, as well as sensible, who reconciles her to treatment so inferior to her deserts. Woodville will agree with me, I dare say ; for the character suits with his intended ; and, faith, he will make but a modish husband, or he could not endure to see her flying about, like the queen-bee, with the whole hive at her heels.

Ld Glen. You are too captious, brother !

Gov. And you too placid, brother ! If, like me, you had been toiling a third of your days to compass a favourite design, and found it disappointed at the moment you thought it complete, what would even your serene lordship say and do ?—Here have I promised myself a son in your's,—an heir in your's ;—instead of which——

Ld Glen. His marriage with Miss Mortimer will not make him unworthy either title.

Gov. Never mention her name to me, I beg, my lord !—I hate all mode-mongers of either sex : the wife I would have given him has beauty without knowing it, innocence without knowing it, because she knows nothing else ; and, to surprise you farther, forty thousand pounds without knowing it ;—nay,

to bring all your surprises together, is my daughter without knowing it.

Ld Glen. Your daughter ! Why, have you married since my sister's death ? Your daughter by her you lost before you went abroad ?

Gov. Yes, but I shall find her again, I believe.—I know you will call this one of my old whims, as usual, but we have all some ; witness this dainty project of your's ; and so I will tell you the truth in spite of that project.—From the very birth of this girl, I saw her mother would spoil her, and, had she lived, proposed kidnapping Miss in her infancy.

Ld Glen. Kidnap your own daughter !—Why, brother, I need only prove this to obtain a commission of lunacy, and shut you up for life.

Gov. Why, though my wife was your lordship's sister, I will venture to tell you she was plaguy fantastical, and contrived to torment me as much with her virtues, as others by their vices—Such a fuss about her delicacy, her sensibility, and her refinement, that I could neither look, move, nor speak, without offending one or the other, and execrated the inventor of the jargon every hour in the four and twenty ;—a jargon I resolved my girl should never learn ; and Heaven no sooner took her mother, (Heaven be praised for all things !) than I dispatch'd her draggle-tail'd French governess, made a bonfire of every book on education, whip'd Miss into a post-chaise, under a pretence of placing her in a nunnery ; instead of which, I journeyed into Wales, and left her in the care of a poor curate's wife, whose name was up as the best housewife in the whole country ; then return'd, with a solemn history of her death in the small-pox.

Ld Glen. Well, this is indeed astonishing ! an admirable tutoress truly for my niece !

Gov. Yes, but there's a better jest than that.

Ld Glen. Indeed!—is that possible?

Gov. How do you think I contrived to make them obey my instructions?—I saw they suspected I was some rich humourist, and was afraid they would, after all, make a little bit of a gentlewoman of her; for which reason, except the first year in advance, they never had a single shilling of my money.

Ld Glen. This is almost incredible! And so you left your only child to the charity of strangers?

Gov. No, no, not so bad as that neither.—You remember my honest servant Hardy? After the poor fellow's leg was shot off in my tent, I promised him a maintenance; so, entrusting him with the secret, I ordered him to live in the neighbourhood, have an eye on the girl, and claim her if ill used.—Fine accounts I had from him, faith! The old parson and his wife, having no children, and not finding any one own her, gave out she was their's, and doted on her; in short, she is the little wonder of the country: tall as the palm-tree; with cheeks that might shame the drawing-room; and eyes will dim the diamonds I have brought over to adorn them.—This confounded gout has kept me in continual alarm, or else she should have spoke for herself.

Ld Glen. Why then does not Hardy bring her up to you?

Gov. Why, for two very sufficient reasons:—In the first place, that identical parson paid him the last compliment, that is, buried him a twelvemonth ago; and in the second, they would hardly entrust her to any man but him who delivered her to them.—Here was a girl, my lord, to support your title, of which I dare swear you are as fond as ever: she would have brought you a race of true Britons; instead of which, from the painted dolls and unjointed macaronies of these days, we shall produce our own enemies, and have a race of Frenchmen born in England.

Ld Glen. I thank your intention, brother; but am

far from wishing the chief accomplishments of Woodville's lady should be the making cream cheeses, goats' whey, and alder wine.

Gov. Let me tell your lordship, women were never better than when those were their chief accomplishments.—But I may be ridiculous my own way without being singular.—Harcourt shall have my girl, and my money too.—Cream cheeses, quotha? No, no, making cream faces is an accomplishment which the belles of these days oftener excel in.

Ld Glen. I would not advise you to publish this opinion, governor.

Gov. But where is this son of your's? Sure he has not totally forgot his old uncle?

Ld Glen. He will be here immediately.

Gov. Nay, I must e'en take an old man's fate, and follow his mistress without complaint.

Ld Glen. You have no reason for the reproach; this is not his hour for visiting Miss Mortimer.

Gov. Miss Mortimer!—Ha, ha, ha! why, do you think I took her for his mistress?—What, I warrant, I can tell you news of your own family, though I have hardly been three days in it!—Woodville keeps a girl, and in great splendour!—nay, they tell me that the unconscionable young rogue encroaches so far on the privileges of threescore, as to intend marrying the slut.

Ld Glen. You jest, surely?

Gov. There's no jest like a true one—ha, ha, ha! how foolish you look! this is your innocent elegance, this is the blessed effect of letting him live out of your own house!—

Ld Glen. Pr'ythee reserve your raillery, sir, for some less interesting occasion;—to have my views thus in a moment overturned!—Where does she live?

Gov. Ha, ha, ha!—Oh, the difference of those little syllables me and thee!—Now you can guess what

made me so peevish, I suppose?—As to where Miss lives, I have not heard; but somewhere near his lodgings.—A devilish fine girl she is, by the bye.—Ah I told you, twenty years ago, you would spoil this boy—entirely spoil him.

Ld Glen. Zounds! governor, you have a temper Socrates himself could not have supported.—Is this a time for old sayings of twenty years ago?—Finish dressing; by that time your nephew will be here, and I shall have reflected on this matter.

Gov. With all my heart.—'Tis but a boyish frolick, and so good morning to you.—Here; where's my triumvirate? Pompey, Antony, Cæsar! (*Exit.*

Ld Glen. A boyish frolick truly!—many a foolish fellow's life has been marked by such a boyish frolick!—But her residence is the first object of my inquiry.—Vane!

Enter VANE.

Is not my son come?

Vane. This moment, my lord; and waits till the governor is ready.

Ld Glen. Vane!—I have deserved you should be attached to me, and I hope you are?

Vane. My lord! (what the devil is he at?) [*Aside.*

Ld Glen. This strange old governor has alarmed me a good deal;—you are more likely to know whether with reason than I can be.—Have you heard any thing important of my son lately?

Vane. Never, my lord.

Ld Glen. Not that he keeps a mistress?—What does the fool smile at!

Vane. I did not think that any thing important, my lord.

Ld Glen. I do, sir—and am told a more important thing; that he even thinks of marrying her—Now, though I cannot credit this, I would chuse to know what kind of creature she is. Could not you assume

a clownish disguise, and, scraping an acquaintance with her people, learn something of her character and designs?

Vane. Doubtless, to oblige your lordship, I could do such a thing.—But, if Mr Woodville's sharp eyes (and love will render them still sharper) should discover me, I might chance to get a good drubbing in the character of a spy.

Id Glen. Oh, it is very improbable he should suspect you: at the worst, name your employer, and your bones are safe.—The office, perhaps, is not very agreeable, but I impose few such on you: execute it well, and you shall remember it with pleasure.—I will detain Woodville till you are ready; and, as I doubt not that his next visit will be to this creature, by following him you will find out where she lives. Prepare then as quick as possible, and send me word when you are ready; for, till then, I will not suffer him to depart. *(Exit.*

Vane. A pretty errand this his formal lordship has honour'd me with!—Um; if I betray him, shall I not get more by it;—ay, but our heir is such a sentimental spark, that, when his turn was served, he might betray me. Were he one of our hare-um skare-um; good-natured, good-for-nothing fellows, it would go against my conscience to do him an ill turn.—I believe I stand well in my lord's will, if Counsellor Puzzle may be trusted, (and when he can get nothing by a lie, perhaps he may tell truth,) so, like all thriving men, I will be honest, because it best serves my interest. *(Exit.*

SCENE III.

*A confined Garden.**WOODVILLE walking about.*

Wood. How tedious is this uncle!—how tedious everybody!—Was it not enough to spend two detestable months from my love, merely to preserve the secret, but I must be tantalized with seeing without arriving at her? Yet how, when I do see her, shall I appease that affecting pride of a noble heart, conscious too late of its own inestimable value?—Why was I not uniformly just?—I had then spared myself the bitterest of regrets.

Enter CAPTAIN HARCOURT.

Har. Woodville! how dost?—Don't you, in happy retirement, pity me my Ealing and Acton marches and countermarches, as Foote has it?—But, methinks thy face is thinner and longer than a forsaken nymph's, who is going through the whole ceremony of nine months' repentance.—What, thou'st fall'n in love?—rustically too?—nay, pr'ythee don't look so very lamentable!

Wood. Ridiculous!—keep this Park conversation for military puppies!—How can we have an eye or ear for pleasure, when our fate hangs over us undecided?

Har. I guess what you mean; but why make mountains of mole-hills? Is the rosy-fisted damsel so obstinately virtuous?

Wood. Imagine a fair favourite of Phœbus in all respects; since, while her face caught his beams, her heart felt his genius!—Imagine all the graces hid under a straw hat and russet gown; imagine—

Har. You have imagined enough of conscience! and now for a few plain facts, if you please.

Wood. To such a lovely country maid I lost my heart last summer; and soon began to think romances the only true histories; all the toilsome glories recorded by Livy phantoms of pleasure, compared with the mild enjoyments described by Sir Philip Sidney; and happiness not merely possible in a cottage, but only possible there.

Har. Well, all the philosophers, ancient and modern, would never be able to convince me a coach was not a mighty pretty vehicle, and the lasses as good-natured in town as country; but pray let us know why you laid aside the pastoral project of eating fat bacon, and exercising a crook all day, that thou might'st conclude the evening with the superlative indulgence of a peat-fire and a bed stuff'd with straw?

Wood. Why, faith, by persuading the dear girl to share mine.

Har. Oh, now you talk the language of the world: and does that occasion thee such a melancholy face?

Wood. How ignorant are you both of me and her!—Every moment since I prevailed has only served to convince me I can sooner live without every thing else than her; and this fatal leisure (caused by my absence with my father) she has employ'd in adding every grace of art to those of nature; till, thoroughly shocked at her situation, her letters are as full of grief as love, and I dread to hear every hour I have lost her.

Har. I dread much more to hear you have lost yourself. Ah, my dear Woodville, the most dangerous charm of love is, every man conceits no other ever

found out his method of loving : but, take my word for it, your Dolly may be brought back to a milk-maid.—Leave her to herself a while, and she'll drop the celestials, I dare swear.

Wood. She is too noble : and nothing but the duty I owe to so indulgent a father prevents me from offering her all the reparation in my power.

Har. A fine scheme truly ! Why, Woodville, art frantic ?—To predestinate yourself among the horned cattle of Doctors Commons, and take a wife for the very reason which makes so many spend thousands to get rid of one——

Wood. To withdraw an amiable creature from her duty, without being able to make her happy, is to me a very serious reflection ;—nay, I sinned, I may say, from virtue ; and, had I been a less grateful son, might have called myself a faultless lover.

Har. Well, well, man ! you are young enough to trust to time, and he does wonders.—Don't go now and ruin yourself with your uncle ;—I have found him out already, and advertise you, none of your formal obsequious bows and respectful assents will do with him ; having been cheated in former times of half his fortune by a parasite, he mistrusts every one, and always mistakes politeness for servility. Maintain your own opinion, if you would win his ; for he generally grows undetermined the moment he knows those around him are otherwise : and, above all, shake off this mental lethargy.

Wood. I will endeavour to take your advice.—Should she fly, I were undone for ever !—but you are no judge of my Cecilia's sincerity. How should you know those qualities, which rise with every following hour ?—Can you think so meanly of me, as that I could be duped by a vulgar wretch, a selfish wanton ? Oh no !—she possesses every virtue but the one I have robbed her of.

[*Exit.*

HARCOURT *alone.*

Har. Poor Frank! thy sponsors surely, by intuition, characterised thee when they gavetheethatname.—Did I love your welfare less, I could soon ease your heart, by acquainting you of my marriage with Miss Mortimer; but now the immediate consequence would be this ridiculous match.—How, if I apprize either my lord or the governor, both obstinate in different ways? I might betray only to ruin him.—A thought occurs;—my person is unknown to her.—Chusing an hour when he is absent, I'll pay her a visit, offer her an advantageous settlement, and learn from her behaviour her real character and intentions.
[*Exit.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

An elegant Dressing-Room, with a Toilet richly ornamented. A Harpsichord, and a frame with Embroidery.

BRIDGET *fetches various small jars with flowers, and talks as she places them.*

Brid. Lord help us!—How fantastical some folks not an hundred miles off are!—If I can imagine what's come to my lady.—Here has she been sighing

and groaning these two months, because her lover was in the country; and now, truly, she's sighing and groaning because he is come to town.—Such maggots indeed!—I might as well have staid in our parish all the days of my life, as to live mewed up with her in this dear sweet town. I could but have done that with a virtuous lady—although I knew she never was at Fox-hall in all her jaunts: and we two should cut such a figure there!—Bless me! what's come to the glass? (*Setting her dress.*) Why, sure, it is dulled with her eternal sighing, and makes me look as frightful as herself!—O! here she comes, with a face as long and dismal as if he was going to be married, and to somebody else too.

CECILIA *enters, and throws herself on the sofa, leaning on her hand.*

Cec. What can detain Woodville such an age?—It is an hour at least since he rode by.—Run, Bridget, and look if you can see him through the drawing-room window.

Brid. Yes, madam. (*Exit, eyeing her with contempt.*)

Cec. How wearisome is every hour to the wretched!—They catch at each future one, merely to while away the present. For, were Woodville here, could he relieve me from the torment of reflection, or the strong, though silent, acknowledgment my own heart perpetually gives of my error?

Brid. (*Without.*) Here he comes, ma'am, here he comes!

Cec. Does he?—Run down then. (*Fluttered.*)

Brid. Dear me, no; 'tis not neither; (*Enters.*) 'tis only the French ambassador's new cook, with his huge bag and long ruffles.

Cec. Blind animal!—Sure nothing is so tormenting as expectation!

Brid. La', ma'am!—any thing will torment one,

when one has a mind to be tormented ; which must be your case for sartin. What signifies sitting mope, mope, mope, from morning to night ?—You'd find yourself a deal better if you went out only two or three times a day. For a walk, we are next door to the Park, as I may say ; and for a ride, such a dear sweet vis-a-vis and pretty horses might tempt any one : then, as to company, you'll say, a fig for your starched ladies, who owe their virtue to their ugliness !—mine is very much at your service—(*Curt-sies.*)

Cec. How could I endure this girl, did I not know that her ignorance exceeds even her impertinence !—I have no pleasure in going abroad.

Brid. Oh la, ma'am ! how should you know till you try ? Sure every body must wish to see and be seen.—Then there's such a delightful hurricane ; all the world are busy, though most are doing nothing ; to splash the mob, and drive against the people of quality !—Oh, give me a coach and London for ever and ever !—You could but lock yourself up, were you as old and ugly as gay Lady Grizzle, at next door.

Cec. Had I been so, I had continued happy.

Brid. La, ma'am, don't ye talk so profanely !—Happy to be old and ugly !—Or, I'll tell you what, as you don't much seem to fancy going out, suppose you were to come down now and then, (you know we have a pure large hall,) and take a game of romps with us ? If you were once to see our Jacob hunt the slipper, you would die with laughing !—Madam Frisk, my last mistress, used, as soon as ever master was gone, (and indeed he did not trouble her much with his company,) to run down, draw up her brocaded niggie-de-gee, and fall to play at some good fun or other !—Dear heart, we were as merry then as the day was long !—I am sure I have never been half so happy since !

Cec. I cannot possibly imitate the model you pro-

pose ; but though I don't choose to go abroad, you may.

Brid. I don't love to go much among the mobility, neither. If indeed, madam, next winter, you'd give me some of your tickets, I would fain go to a masquerade, (it vexes me to see um stick in the thing-um-bobs for months together,) and Mrs Trim promises me the lent of a Venus's dress, which, she says, I shall cut a figure in. Now, madam, if I had but some diamonds, (for beggars wear diamonds there, they say,) who knows but I might make my fortune, like you ?

Cec. Mar it, much rather, like me.—That is no place for girls of your station, which exposes you to so much insult.

Brid. Ah, let me alone, madam, for taking care of number one. I ware never afeared but once in my whole life, and that ware of grand-far's ghost ; for he always hated I, and used to walk, poor soul ! in our barken, for all the world like an ass with a tie-wig on.—*(Knocking hard.)*

Cec. Hark ! that sure is Woodville's knock ! Fly, and see !—*(Walks eagerly to the door, and returns as eagerly.)*—Alas ! is this my repentance ?—Dare I sin against my judgment ?

Enter WOODVILLE.

Wood. My Cecilia !—My soul !—Have I at last the happiness of beholding you ?—You know me too well to imagine I would punish myself by a moment's voluntary delay.

Cec. Oh no ; it is not that—*(Both sit down on the sofa.)*

Wood. Say, you are glad to see me ; afford me one kind word to atone for your cold looks !—Are you not well ?

Cec. Rather say, I am not happy.—My dear Woodville, I am an altered being !—Why have you redu-

ced me to shrink thus in your presence? Oh! why have you made me unworthy of yourself?—(*Leans against his shoulder, weeping.*)

Wood. Cruel girl!—Is this my welcome?—When did I appear to think you so?

Cec. Tell me when any one else would think me otherwise?

Wood. Will you never be above so narrow a prejudice?—Are we not the whole world to each other?—Nay, dry your tears! allow me to dry them: (*Kisses her cheek.*) What is there, in the reach of love or wealth, I have not sought to make you happy?

Cec. That which is the essence of all enjoyments—innocence!—Oh, Woodville! you knew not the value of the heart whose peace you have destroyed. My sensibility first ruined my virtue, and then my repose.—But, though for you I consented to abandon an humble happy home, to embitter the age of my venerable father, and bear the contempt of the world, I can never support my own!—My heart revolts against my situation, and hourly bids me renounce a splendour, which only renders guilt more despicable.—(*Rises.*) I meant to explain this hereafter; but the agitation of my mind obliged me to lighten it immediately.

Wood. Is your affection then already extinct? for sure it must, when you can resolve to torture me thus.

Cec. Were my love extinct, I might sink into a mean content.—Oh no!—'Tis to that alone I owe my resolution.

Wood. Can you then plunge me into despair?—So young, so lovely too!—Oh! where could you find so safe an asylum as my heart?—Whither could you fly?

Cec. I am obliged to you, sir, for the question; but who is it has made me thus destitute?—I may retain your protection, indeed, but at what price?

Wood. Give me but a little time, my love !—I am equally perplexed between my father and my uncle, each of whom offers me a wife I can never love.—Suffer them to defeat each other's schemes !—Let me, if possible, be happy without a crime ; for I must think it one to grieve a parent hitherto so indulgent.—I will not put any thing in competition with your peace ; and long for the hour when the errors of the lover will be absorbed in the merits of the husband.

Cec. No, Woodville !—That was, when innocent, as far above my hopes, as it is now beyond my wishes.—I love you too sincerely to reap any advantage from so generous an error : yet you at once flatter and wound my heart in allowing me worthy such a distinction ; but love cannot subsist without esteem ; and how should I possess your's, when I have lost even my own ?

Wood. It is impossible you should ever lose either, while so deserving of both.—I shall not be so easily denied hereafter, but am bound by the caprices of others at present.—I am obliged to return directly, but will hasten to you the very first moment.—When we meet again, it must be with a smile, remember !

Cec. It will when we meet again.—Oh, how those words oppress me ! (*Aside.*)—But do not regulate your conduct by mine, nor make me an argument with yourself for disobeying my lord ; for here I solemnly swear never to accept you without the joint consent of both our fathers ; and that I consider as an eternal abjuration !—But may the favoured woman you are to make happy have all my love without my weakness ! [*Exit in tears.*]

Wood. Disinterested, exalted girl !—Why add such a needless bar ? For is it possible to gain my father's consent ?—And yet, without her, life would be insupportable !—The censures of the world !—What is that world to me ?—Were I weak enough to

sacrifice her to the erroneous judgment of the malicious and unfeeling, what does it offer to reward me?—Commendations I can never deserve, and riches I can never enjoy. [Exit.

SCENE II.

A Street before CECILIA'S House.

JACOB opens the door, and lets out WOODVILLE, who passes over the stage; JACOB remains with his hands in his pockets, whistling.

Enter VANE, disguised, with a basket of game in his hand.

Vane. So, there he goes at last. I may open the attack without fear of a discovery, since our hopeful heir will hardly return directly.—This intelligence of my landlord's at the Blue Posts has made the matter much easier.—Um, a good subject!—Sure I ought to know that bumpkin's face!—As I live, my playfellow at the parish school, Jacob Gawky!—Now for a touch of the old dialect.—D'ye hire, young mon!—Prey, do ye know where one Bett Dowson do live?

Jac. Noa, not I.

Vane. Hey!—Why, zure as two-pence, thou beest Jacob Gawky!

Jac. Odsbodlikins! zo I be indeed!—But, who beest thee?

Vane. What doest not knaw thy ould zkhoolvel-low, Wull, mun?

Jac. Hey!—What—Wull!—Od rabbit it, if I ben't desperate glad to zee thee; where doost live now, mun?

Vane. Down at huome, in our parish.—I be 'coom'd up with Zur Isaac Promise, to be made excoiseman.

Jac. Thee'st good luck, faith! wish, no odds to thee, my fortin ware as good!—but theed'st always a muortal good notion of wroiting and cyphers, while I don't knaw my own neame when I do zee it.—What didst leave zea for?

Vane. Why, I ware afraid I should be killed before I com'd to be a great mon! But what brought thee into this foine house?

Jac. Fortin, Wull! Fortin.—Didst thee knaw Nan o' th' mill?

Vane. Noa, not I.

Jac. Od rabbit it! I thought every mortal zoul had knawd zhe.—Well, Nan and I ware such near neighbors, there ware only a barn between us;—she ware a desperate zmart lass, that's the truth on't: and I had half a moind to teake to feyther's business, and marry zhe:—but ecod the zimpletony grow'd so fond, that, some how or other, I ware tired first! when, behold you, zquire takes a fancy to me, and made I cuome and live at the hall; and, as my head run all on tuown, when aw comed up to London, aw brought I wi' un; zo I thought to get rid that way of the bullocking of Nan.

Vane. But, Jacob, how didst get into thic foine house?

Jac. Dang it, doan't I zeay, I'll tell thee present—Zoa, as I ware zaying, one holiday I went to zee thic there church, wi' the top like a huge punch-bowl turned auver; and, dang it! who should arrive in the very nick, but madam Nan—Well, huome comes I as merry as a cricket;—zquire caals for I in a muortal hurry; when who should I zee, but madam Nan on her marrowbones, a-croying for dear loife!—dang it, I thought at first I should ha zwounded;—zo a made a long zarmant about 'ducing a poor girl, and

zaid I should zartainly go to the divil for it, and then turned I off. But the best fun is to come, mun ;—rabbit me ! if aw did not teake Nan into keeping himself ; and zhe do flaunt it about as foine as a duchess.

Vane. A mighty religious moral gentleman, truly !
(*Aside.*) Well, how came you to this pleece ?

Jac. Why, Meay-day, walking in Common Garden to smell the pozeys, who should I zee but our Bridget ?—I was muortal glad to zee her, you must needs think, and zhe got I this here pleece.

Vane. Wounds ! dost live wi' a lord in this foine house ?

Jac. Noa, a leady, you fool ! but such a leady, zuch a dear, easy, good-natured creature !—zhe do never say noa, let we do what we wull.

Vane. Now to the point. (*Aside.*)—Is your lady married ?

Jac. Noa : but she's as good ; and what'st think, mun !—to a lord's zon !—though if a ware a king, aw would not be too good for zhe.—A mortal fine comely mon too, who do love her as aw do the eyes in his head. Couzin Bridget do tell I, zhe zeed'd a letter where aw do zay aw wull ha her any day of the week, whatever do come o' th' next.—Why I warrant they have 'pointed wedding-day !

Vane. The devil they have ! my lord will go mad at this news. [*Aside.*]

Jac. Lauk a deazy ! how merry we will be on that day ! Wo't come and junket wi' us ?

Vane. Yes, yes, I shall certainly make one among you, either then or before ; (*Aside.*) but now I must goa and give this geame to zquire—zquire—what the dickens be his neame ! I do always forget it—there zhould be a ticket somewhere—zoa, rabbit me ! if some of your London fauk ha' no' cut it off out o' fun !

Jac. Ha, ha, ha ! ecod, nothing more likelier—
(*Both laugh fooli hly.*) The rum people be zo zharp as

needles.—But there's no pleace like it for all that—I be set upon living and dying in it.

Vane. Now to secure my return if necessary. (*Aside.*) —I'll tell thee what, Jacob, seeing as how I ha' lost thic' there direction, do thee teake the basket: 'tis only a present of geame from the parson o' our parish; and, if zo be I can't find the gentleman, why 'tis honestly mine.—Meay be I'll come, and teake a bit o' supper wi' ye.

Jac. Wull ye indeed?—dang it! that's clever; and then you'll see our Bridget. She's a mortal zmart lass, I promise ye!—and, meay be, may'st get a peep at my leady, who's desperate handsome!—Good bye t'ye.—Bridget's zo comical!—Od rabbit it, we'll be main merry! [*Exit.*]

VANE *alone.*

Vane. Thus far I have succeeded to admiration! Our young heir has really a mind to play the fool, and marry his mistress!—though, faith, marrying his own does not seem very inexcusable, when so many of his equals modestly content themselves with the cast-offs of half their acquaintance. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

An Apartment in CECILIA'S House.

Enter BRIDGET.

Brid. So, just the old story again! crying, crying for ever!—Lord, if I was a man, I should hate such a whimpering—What would she have, I wonder? to refuse such a handsome, genteel, good-natured man!

and I'll be sworn, he offer'd to marry her, for I listened with all my ears!—Oh, that he would have me now!—I should become my own coach purdigiously, that's a sure thing. Hey, who knocks?

Enter JACOB.

Jac. A young mon do want my leady.

Brid. A man!—what sort of a man?

Jac. Why a mon—like—just such another as I.

Brid. No, no, no;—that's not so easy to find.—What can any man want with her?—Shew him in here, Jacob.

Jac. (*Returning in a kind of glee.*) When shall we have the wedding, Bridget?

Brid. We shall have a burying first, I believe.

Jac. Od rabbit it! we won't be their seconds there, faith! [*Exit.*]

Brid. Now, if he mistakes me for my lady, I shall find out what he wants.

Enter CAPTAIN HARCOURT, disguised, with JACOB.

Har. (*Surveying her.*)—Is that your lady?

Jac. He, he, he! lauk, zur, don't you know that's our Bridget?

Brid. So, deuce on him, there's my whole scheme spoilt!—My lady, sir, is engaged; but if you tell me your business, it will do just as well.

Har. For yourself it may, child! (*Chucks her under the chin.*)

Brid. What, you belong to Mr Gargle the apothecary? or come from the jeweller on Ludgate-hill? or have a letter from——

Har. (*Interrupting her.*)—The very person; you have hit it. And now, do me the favour to tell your lady a stranger wishes to speak to her on particular business.

Brid. Very well, sir:—Was ever handsome man so crabbed!

Har. Egad, if the mistress have half as much tongue as the maid, Woodville may catch me in the midst of my first speech.—Now for my credentials! and here she comes!—A lovely girl, indeed! I can scarce blame Frank, for she awes me.

Enter CECILIA, followed officiously by BRIDGET.

Cec. I was informed, sir, you had particular business with me?

Har. I took the liberty, madam,—I say, madam, I——

Cec. As I have neither friends or relations in London, (*Sighs*) I am at a loss to guess——

Har. What I would communicate, madam, requires secrecy.

Cec. Bridget, go where I ordered you just now.

Brid. Yes, madam, but if I an't even with you for this—— [*Exit.*]

Cec. I complied with your request, sir, without inquiring the motive; because you, I think, can have only one—My father, if I may trust my heart, has made you his messenger to an unwilling offender.

Har. Pardon me, madam, but I refer you to this.

Cec. (*Reads.*)—"Madam,—being certainly informed Mr Woodville is on the point of marrying a lady chosen by his friends, when it is presumed you will be disengaged, a nobleman of rank, and estate above what he can ever possess, is thus early in laying his heart and fortune at your feet, lest some more lucky rival should anticipate him.—The bearer is authorised to disclose all particulars, and offer you a settlement worthy your acceptance.—Deign, madam, to listen to him on the subject, and you will find the unknown lover as generous and not less constant than Woodville." Good heavens! to what an insult have I exposed myself! (*She bursts into tears, and sinks into a chair, without minding HARCOURT, who watches her with irresolution.*)

Har. What can I think?—there is an air of injured delicacy in her, which teaches me to reproach myself for a well-meant deceit.—If, madam,——

Cec. I had forgot this wretch. (*Rises.*) Return, sir, to your vile employer; tell him, whoever he is, I am too sensible of the insult, though not entitled to resent it—tell him, I have a heart above my situation, and that he has only had the barbarous satisfaction of adding another misery to those which almost overwhelmed me before.

Har. Hear me, madam, I conjure you!

Cec. Never! a word would contaminate me——
(*Struggling to go off.*)

Har. Nay, you shall—You do not know half the good consequences of this letter; I am the friend, the relation of Woodville—my name Harcourt!

Cec. Is it possible he should be so cruel, so unjust——

Har. He is neither cruel nor unjust, but only unfortunate.—Hear—he designs to marry you; this I learnt from himself only this morning. As a proof of my sincerity, I will own I doubted your right to that mark of his esteem, and made this trial in consequence. Pleased to find you worthy of his rank, I feel shock'd at reminding you, you ought not to share it. But, madam, if you truly love him, you cannot wish that, to be just to you, he should be unjust to those who have a prior right over him.—This shall positively be my last effort. (*Aside.*)

Cec. A motive like your's, sir, will excuse any thing. How little my happiness, honour, or interest, ever weighed against his, need not be repeated. Far be it from me now to disgrace him; he is apprized of my invincible objections to a match which will never take place. May he form a happier, while I, by a voluntary poverty, expiate my offence!

Har. Ma—Ma—what the devil choaks me so!—
I am struck with your sentiments, and must find you

a proper asylum. The moment I saw you, I had hopes such manners could not veil an immoral heart; I have proved your sincerity, and owe a reparation to your delicacy. The proposed bride of Woodville is every way worthy that distinction; nor am I without hopes even she will be prevailed on to protect you.—But I must not leave a doubt of my sincerity:—Do you know Miss Mortimer?

Cec. I have seen the lady, sir. But dare I credit my senses?—Has heaven form'd two such hearts, and for me?—

Har. With her, your story will be buried for ever: and, I think, the sooner you disappear, the more easily will you prevent Woodville's disobedience. I will open the affair to Miss Mortimer directly, and, if she acquiesces, desire her to call for you in person, to prevent the possibility of any artifice.

Cec. He who inspired such sentiments alone can reward them! Oh, sir, you have raised a poor desponding heart!—but it shall be the business of my future life to deserve those favours I can never half repay.

Har. I find, by punishing me with acknowledgments, you are resolved to be obliged to me. The time is too precious to be wasted on such trifles. At seven, you shall have certain intelligence of my success; employ the interim to the best advantage, and hope every thing from daring to deserve well. (*Exit.*

CECILIA *alone.*

Astonishing interposition of heaven!—Hope!—What have I to hope?—But let the consciousness of acting rightly support me in the sad moment of renouncing Woodville; and, in him, all that rendered life desirable. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

LORD GLENMORE'S *House*.

LORD GLENMORE and VANE.

Ld Glen. And are you sure of all this ?

Vane. Absolutely, my lord ; I have known the bumpkin, her footman, from the height of his own club.

Ld Glen. What a cursed infatuation !—these are the comforts of children !—our fears beginning from the moment our power ends ; the happiest of fathers is not to be envied :—I know not what to resolve on !

Vane. If I may be permitted to advise, my lord—

Ld Glen. And who asked your advice, sir ?

Vane. You have, my lord, formerly.

Ld Glen. Take care you stay till I do ! Leave me, sir.

Vane. If you don't like my advice, I shall give you my opinion very shortly.—A crusty crab !

[*Exit muttering.*]

Ld Glen. This is the certain consequence of entrusting low people ;—and yet there is no doing without them.—I can never master my feelings enough to speak properly to Woodville on the subject, therefore must fix on some other method—(*Pauses.*)—That's a sure one, and falls heavy on the artful, aspiring creature only !—Vane !

Re-enter VANE.

—Could not you procure me a travelling-chaise and four stout fellows immediately ?

Vane. To be sure, my lord, I can order a chaise at any inn, if you choose it.

Ld Glen. Pho, pho!—don't put on that face;—you must go through with this thing like a man.—Here's something for the share you have already had in it.—Do what I have ordered, and wait near the Horse-guards in about an hour, when I shall seize this insolent baggage, and convey her out of my son's reach.—You gave me a high-flown account of her;—and, as you are a smart young fellow, and she must at least be pretty, if we can contrive to frighten her into taking you as a husband, it will end all my fears, and shall be the making of your fortune.

Vane. 'Gad, I like the project well!—A handsome wife is the best bait, when we fish for preferment;—and this gives me a double claim both on father and son. (*Aside.*)—Nothing but the profound respect I have for your lordship could induce me to think of this;—though born without rank and fortune, I have a soul, my lord——

Ld Glen. Come, come, my good lad! I guess what you would say; but we have no time for speeches.—I have set my heart on the success of this project, and you shall find your interest in indulging me.

[*Exeunt different ways.*]

SCENE V.

MISS MORTIMER'S Apartment.

Enter CAPTAIN HARCOURT, meeting MISS MORTIMER.

Har. If I were to judge of your temper by your looks, my dear, I should say it was uncommonly sweet this morning.

Miss Mor. A truce with compliment ! I must, in reason, renounce dear flattery after marriage.

Har. To flattery you never paid court ; but the language of the heart and the world will sometimes resemble.—I ought, however, to praise your temper, for I am come to try it, and give you a noble opportunity of exerting its benevolence.

Miss Mor. A benevolence you certainly doubt, by this studied eulogium.

Har. I might, did I not know it well.—In short, my love, I have taken the strangest step this morning——

Miss Mor. What step, for heaven's sake ?

Har. In regard to a lady——

Miss Mor. Not another wife, I hope ?

Har. No,—only a mistress.

Miss Mor. Oh, a trifle ! a trifle !

Har. You may laugh, madam, but I am serious ; and a fine girl she is ;—nay, to shew you I have not read Chesterfield in vain, I have robbed my dearest friend of her : In plain English, Woodville has a mistress he dotes on so madly, as even to intend marrying her.—Imagining her, like most of her stamp, only an artful, interested creature, I paid her a visit as a stranger, with an offer which must have unveiled her heart, had it been base ; but I found her, on the contrary, a truly noble-minded girl, and far above her present situation, which she earnestly wishes to quit.—In short, my dear, I thought it prudent to part them ; and, in your name, offered her an asylum.

Miss Mor. In my name ! You amaze me, Mr Harcourt ! Would you associate your wife with a kept mistress ? Bring such an acquisition into the house of Lord Glenmore, and deprive Woodville of, perhaps, his only reason for not interfering with us ?—Do you think I credit this sudden acquaintance ?

Har. I deceived myself, I find ;—I thought you

above such low suspicion, that you could make distinctions.

Miss Mor. Yes, yes, I can make distinctions more clearly than you wished. You must excuse my interference in this affair, sir; and let me hint to you, that your own will do as little credit to your heart as to your understanding.

Har. Mighty well, madam; go on! Settle this with respect to yourself, but do not be concerned about me; for, in one word, if you cannot resolve on protecting this poor unfortunate, I will!

Miss Mor. (Aside.) That must not be; yet his warmth alarms me.—Nay, but, my dear, think deliberately!—Supposing her all you say, the world judges by actions, not thoughts, and will bury her merit in her situation.

Har. It is that cruel argument perpetuates error in so many of your frail sex; be the first to rise above it. That you are in Lord Glenmore's house, will be your justification, both to the world and himself; for what but a generous motive can actuate you? In my eyes, my dear Sophia, virtue never looks so lovely as when she stretches out her hand to the fallen!

Miss Mor. Oh, Harcourt! I am ashamed of my suspicion; I ought to have known all the candour and generosity of your heart, and received, in a moment, the unhappy woman it patronized;—yet, at this crisis in our own affairs, to run the chance of farther exasperating my benefactor—

Har. I am not to learn, that friendship and love have been mere masks to fraud and folly in the great world; no one would blame me, were I to suffer Woodville to ruin himself, as the shortest way of fixing my own fortune, and obtaining my lord's approbation of your choice; but I know not how it happened, that, when a mere boy, I took it into my head truth was as much to the purpose as lying; and, as I never got into more scrapes than others,

why, I still pursue my system, and prefer honour to art. Then, if we fail, we have something better to console us than a pond or pistol ; and, if we succeed, what is there wanting to our happiness ?

Miss Mor. And how do you mean to manage her escape ?

Har. That, my dearest, is the difficulty. I found she had seen you, and, therefore, was obliged to satisfy her of my honour, by assuring her you would call for her in person.

Miss Mor. Very well ; we must carefully watch our opportunity. You dine here—the word of command you are accustomed to obey, but you must now become obedient to the look : for, you know, I have my difficulties, however strong my desire of obliging you.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

A magnificent Drawing-Room.

MISS MORTIMER *pouring out coffee, sends it to the company* ; CAPTAIN HARCOURT *leans against a pannel near her, sipping it* ; at a little distance, the Governor and WOODVILLE *playing at Backgammon*, while LORD GLENMORE *leans over his Chair, thoughtfully observing the behaviour of his son, who loses merely to make his uncle leave off.*

Har. It grows near the appointed hour, my love !—but how to make sure of Woodville—

Miss Mor. You should have thought of that before, my sagacious confidant ! However, as I do not need your company, fasten it upon him ;—pretend a duel, —pretend an intrigue ;—in short, if all else fails, pretend you are dying, and keep him to make your will, rather than suffer him to interrupt me.

Ld Glen. (To himself.) What way can I secure the absence of this son of mine ? For, I see plainly, another lucky hit would almost provoke him into throwing the dice in the governor's face ; yet Vane, I doubt, has hardly been able to procure me every convenience in so short a time. However, I will

make one of my own garrets his minx's prison, rather than suffer her to interfere with my serious views.

Gov. (*Rising from play.*) Zounds, Frank ! you are like the French ; so ready to be beat, that there is hardly any triumph in conquering you. But you shall take your revenge, I insist upon it.

Wood. Another time, sir ;—my head aches ;—my—in short, I cannot play any longer ; my cousin will engage with you.

Har. (*Twitching his sleeve.*) Kind sir, your cousin is infinitely indebted to you ; but he, like yourself, may have something else to do ; and so indeed has every body, for we all seem impatient to separate.

Miss Mor. (*To the servant, removing coffee.*) Bid Warner send my cloak.

Ld Glen. Going abroad, my dear ?

Miss Mor. Only a formal round, my lord.

Ld Glen. Woodville, you attend Miss Mortimer.

Miss Mor. Sweetly contrived, that, however ; and my lover seems posed. (*Aside to HARCOURT.*)—I will not so severely tax Mr Woodville's politeness, my lord.

Wood. You are very obliging, madam ;—(*To HARCOURT.*) and the only thing she has said or done to oblige me this day, *entre nous*.

Har. (*Aside.*) Um ! not quite sure of that, if you knew all—(*Turning to MISS MORTIMER.*) I will march off quietly, and lie in wait for Woodville, so that I think you may depend on his not meeting you.

[*Goes off unobserved.*]

[WOODVILLE, *having taken his hat and sword, offers his hand to MISS MORTIMER.*]

Ld Glen. So, he is going to escape !—They all take pleasure in perplexing me.—Frank, return to me directly ; I have bethought myself of something very important, in which I need your assistance.

Wood. Would I had bethought myself of vanishing, like Harcourt!—How devilishly vexatious!

[*Leads MISS MORTIMER off.*

Gov. So there goes madam to coquette, curtesy, and talk nonsense with every well-dressed ape of either sex. Before I would allow a girl such freedom——

Ld Glen. Brother, do not judge till you know her, and give me leave to tell you, these prejudices of your temper will render you very ridiculous.

Gov. The prejudices of my temper! Oh, lord! oh, lord! this is an excellent jest. Zounds, because you have not the use of your eyes.

Ld Glen. I shall never have patience!—My head is just now full of something too important to examine which of us is most in the wrong.—I am fixed on removing this ambitious minx of my son's for ever out of his reach immediately. Will you oblige me with the company of your servants? Being slaves, they will not dare reveal the affair; and, were they so inclined, can hardly comprehend it.

Gov. Will I? Ay, that I will! and with my own company into the bargain!

Ld Glen. Hist! He returns; and if we may judge by his countenance, mortified enough to lose the evening away from her—

Re-enter WOODVILLE.

—Go, my dear Frank, first to Puzzle's chambers, for the mortgage of Hayfield-house, and don't fail to learn his whole opinion upon the subject;—(*Aside to the Governor.*) and that will take two long hours by a very moderate computation; then proceed to the London Tavern, and ask if Levi, the Jew, waits there by my appointment; otherwise, do you wait there till either he or I join you.

Wood. A pretty round-about employment my father has invented for me! (*Aside.*) and I dare not

give the least symptoms of disgust, lest that troublesome old uncle of mine should pry into the cause.—I shall observe your orders, my lord,—though if the devil has called upon the counsellor a little before his time, I shall consider it as an eternal obligation. [Exit.

Ld Glen. Now I must inquire after Vane. [Exit.

Gov. And I will give a little lecture to my myrmidons, and wait, with them, your pleasure.—Od, it will be precious sport, to catch madam so unawares, and see her play off every virtuous grimace with which she entangled young Scape-grace.

[Exeunt severally.]

SCENE II.

The Hall.

Enter VANE looking about.

Hey-day ! sure his old-fashion'd lordship has not employed two of us on one errand !—An old man has been hovering about madam's house, and has followed me here, without my knowing what to make of him ! However, ears befriend me !

[Retires listening.]

Enter the Governor, and his black Servants soon after.

Here, Antony, Pompey, Cæsar ! you dogs ! be ready to attend my lord and me on a little expedition.—No ; no flambeaus, boobies !—the chaste Miss Diana will surely take a spiteful pleasure in lighting us to catch another kind of Miss.—And, do ye hear ? not one syllable of the when, where, or how, except

you intend to dangle on one string, like a bunch of black grapes. *[Talks to them apart.]*

Enter GREY.

Grey. It is here, I am at length informed, the father of this abandoned seducer resides.—Yet what redress can poverty hope from pride?—Surely, however, for his own sake, he will assist me in regaining the poor girl, and afterwards prevent the wretch from pursuing her!—There I suppose he is!—My lord!

Gov. (Turns short upon him.) Well, old sturdy! what do you want with my lord?

Grey. Merciful Heaven! the father of Cecilia.

Vane. (Listening.) Hey!—indeed!

Grey. Oh! how my heart misgives me!—perhaps this base Woodville—her very brother—

Gov. What, is the old man ill?—Sure I know this honest—it is not—yet it is—Grey?

Grey. The same indeed, my lord.

Gov. No my lord to me, man! my name is Harcourt.

Grey. Blessed be Heaven for that, however!

Gov. Be not righteous over-much! for that my name is Harcourt, I do not reckon among the first favours of Heaven.—But, ha, ha! perhaps you thought I had no name at all by this time?—Faith, I put a pretty trick upon—well, well, well!—*(To the blacks.)* you may retire till my lord is ready. *(Exeunt.)*

I am a riddle, honest Grey! but now I am come to expound myself, and make thy fortune into the bargain.—It is many a long day since I saw old England.—But at last I am come home with a light heart and a heavy purse, design to fetch up my Cicely, give her and my money to the honestest fellow I can find, and grow old amid a rosy race of Britons, springing from a stem reared after my own fashion.—There's news for you, my honest friend!

Grey. Alas ! How little will he think I deserve his favour when he hears my account of her ! And how can I shock a parent with what too severely shocks even myself ! [*Aside.*

Gov. What !—Silent, man ?—ha, ha, ha !—I can't but laugh to think how foolish you looked at the second year's end, when no allowance came—but that was my own contrivance ; all done on purpose, my good old soul ! and now it will come in a lump ; there's the whole difference.—Well, and so my dame made her a pattern of housewifery, hey ?—Oh ! I don't intend to touch another pickle or preserve that is not of my little Cicely's own doing ; and I'll build her a dairy with every bowl and churn of silver !—Zounds, it shall be a finer sight than the Tower of London !—and we'll set up Dame Deborah's statue before it, like Queen Anne's in St Paul's Churchyard !—But, why dostn't enjoy this discovery, man ? Art afraid I shall take her from thee ? Oh, never think of that ; for thou shalt bless everypie she makes ; ay, and taste it afterwards, old pudding-sleeves.

Grey. Ah, sir ! (*Sighing.*)

Gov. Hey ? Zounds !—What dost mean ? Sure my Cicely isn't dead !

Grey. No, not dead, sir !

Gov. She's very near it then, I suppose ?

Grey. No, sir.

Gov. No, sir ? Then what the devil do you mean, by alarming me thus, with your “ No, sirs,” after all ?

Grey. Alas ! Is there no greater evil ?

Gov. None, that I know of ;—but your whole fraternity are not more like ravens in colour than note.—Come, let us know what this mighty evil is ?

Grey. For years did she increase in goodness as in beauty ; the charm of every young heart, and the sole comfort of those old ones, to whom Heaven and man seemed to have consigned her for ever.

Gov. Well, well, I had a little bird told me all this—

Grey. About a twelve month ago, during a little absence of mine, a young man of fashion introduced himself into my house; and, my wife being void of suspicion, and the dear girl uninstructed in the ways of this bad world—

Gov. The dog betrayed her!—And is this your care, you old—and that ignoramus, your wife!—Zounds! I am in such a fury!—I want to know no more of her infamous conduct.—Od! I am strangely tempted to have you strangled this moment, as a just reward for your negligence, and so bury the secret with you.

Grey. It is as effectually buried already, sir—I love the dear unhappy girl too well ever to tell her heaven gave her to such a father.

Gov. Yes, yes; you are better suited to the—I hope she pays for this severely!—You make her stand in a white sheet, to be pointed at by the whole village every Sunday, to be sure?

Grey. Alas, sir! She put it out of my power even to forgive her—

Gov. Forgive her! forgive her, truly!

Grey. By flying immediately from her only friend.—Infirm and poor, I struggled with the joint evils till now; when, having collected enough to support me, I walked up in search of her;—it was only yesterday I discovered her in a splendid coach, which I traced to her house.

Gov. A house! I shall run mad entirely! A coach!—Why, dare the little brazen-face pretend to elegance, when I took such pains to quench every spark of gentility in her?

Grey. In the neighbourhood I discovered the name of her seducer; and, in seeking him, met with you.—Moderate your passion, sir—Reflect! When

age is frail, what can we expect in youth?—Shall man desert humanity?

Gov. So, so, so!—Now I am to be tortured with your preaching.—I renounce the unworthy little slut.—I have no friend—no daughter—no any thing.—Od! I would sooner build an hospital for idiots, like Swift, and endow it with all my fortune, than bestow it on one who thus perverts reason.—Hark ye, sir—Forget the way to this house!—Forget you ever saw my face!—Would I had never seen your's!—For, if you dare to send her whining to me, I'll torment you with every plague, power, wealth, law, or even lawyers can set in motion—By heaven, I abjure the audacious little wretch for ever! and will sooner return to India, and bury my gold with those from whom it was taken, than bestow a single shilling on her, when she loses her coach and her house!

Grey. (Contemptuously.) And I will sooner want a shilling, than suffer her to waste her youth in a state which will render her age an insupportable burthen!—Fear not, sir, ever seeing her or me again; for the bosom which reared, will joyfully receive her, nor farther embitter her remaining days with the knowledge she was born the equal of her undoer; and deprived herself of all those blessings Heaven only hid, never denied her. [Exit.

Governor alone.

Gov. Who would have a daughter?—Zounds! I am as hot as if I was in the black hole at Calcutta.—If Miss had only married a lout, from ignorance of her birth, I could have forgiven it; but, her puppy being of fashion, the papers will get hold of it, and I shall be paragraphed into purgatory.—Fools can turn wits on these occasions; and, “A certain governor and his daughter,” will set the grinners in motion from Piccadilly to Aldgate.—This insolent old fellow, too!—I need not wonder where she got her courage!

—Not but I like his spirit—Od ! I like it much !—It proves his innocence.—What the devil did I drive him away for !—Here, dogs !—Run after that old man in black, and order him to return to me this moment.

Enter LORD GLENMORE.

Ld Glen. And now, brother, I am ready for you.

Gov. Yes ; and now, brother, I have something else to mind ; and my servants, moreover— [*Exit.*

Ld Glen. What new whim can this troublesome mortal have taken into his head ? (*A rapping at the door.*) I am not at home, remember.—Miss Mortimer !—Who's with her ?

MISS MORTIMER enters with CECILIA, in mourning.

Miss Mor. Nay, as to that circumstance—Bless me, here's my lord !

Cec. My lord !—Good heavens, I shall sink into the earth !

Miss Mor. He can never guess at you—Recover, my dear creature !

Ld Glen. Is the lady indisposed, Miss Mortimer ?

Miss Mor. Yes, my lord ;—that is, no—I don't know what I am saying.—She has been ill lately, and riding has a little overcome her ; that's all.—(*Aside to CECILIA.*) Struggle to keep up, for heaven's sake and your own.

Cec. Impossible ! (*LORD GLENMORE draws a hall-chair, in which she faints.*)

Ld Glen. Warner ! drops and water in a moment.—How beautiful she is !—her features are exquisitely fine !

Miss Mor. They are thought so, my lord.—Bless me ! where can I have crammed my *Eau de Luce* !—Oh, I have it.

Ld Glen. Her pulse returns—she revives.

Cec. I beg your pardon, madam!—my lord, too!—I am shocked to have occasioned so much trouble.

Miss Mor. Absurd, to apologize for the infirmity of nature:—My lord, I do assure you, was quite anxious.

Ld Glen. The man must surely have lost every sense, who can see this lady, even when deprived of her's, without emotion;—but to me, the languor of illness had ever something peculiarly interesting.—*(Aside.)* I wonder who this elegant creature is.—Her hand seems to tremble strangely.

Cec. Oh, madam!—

Miss Mor. Silence and recollection alone can secure you from suspicion;—I confess, I relied on his absence.

Re-enter the Governor.

Gov. He won't return, hey?—Od! I like the old Cambrian the better for it:—I have fired his Welch blood finely.—Why, what a blockhead was I not to go after him myself!—Methinks, I should like to know miss when I meet her in her coach too.—Um—did he not tell me something of tracing the seducer into this house! *(Stands in amazement a moment, then whistles.)* Woodville's mistress, by every thing contrary! Od, I shall seize the gipsy with redoubled satisfaction! but I must keep my own counsel, or my old beau of a brother will roast me to death on my system of education.—Hey! who has he got there? *(CECILIA rises.)* A pretty lass, faith!—Ah, there is the very thing I admire!—there is gentility, without the fantastical flourishes of fashion!—just the very air I hoped my minx would have had. *(LORD GLENMORE, having led off CECILIA, returns.)*

Ld Glen. I don't know how, but my inclination to this business is over. I think I'll let the matter alone at present.

Gov. The devil you will!—Why, by to-morrow Woodville may have married her.

Ld Glen. D'ye think so?—well, then let's go.

Gov. And what d'ye intend to do with her, pray?

Ld Glen. (Aside.) I won't trust this weathercock till all is safe.—I care not what becomes of her, so she is out of my way;—send her to Bridewell, perhaps—

Gov. To Bridewell, truly!—no, that you sha'n't, neither; Bridewell, quotha!—why, who knows but the fault may be all that young rake-hell, your son's?

Ld Glen. My son's, sir!—Let me tell you, I have not bred him in such a manner.

Gov. Oh, if breeding were any security—Zounds, I shall betray all by another word! *(Aside.)*

Ld Glen. What now can have changed you?—but you are more inconstant than our climate.—Did you ever know one minute what you shou'd think the next? However, to satisfy your scruples, I intend to dispatch her to a nunnery; and, if that don't please you, e'en take charge of her yourself. *(Exeunt together.)*

VANE comes forward.

Vanc. Ha, ha, ha; why, this would make a comedy!—and so, of all birds in the air, his dignified lordship has pitched on me for the husband of the Governor's daughter and his own niece!—Well, if I can but go through with this, it will be admirable!—Thank'd by one for making my fortune, and safe from the anger of all.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Mr Woodville, sir, is just gone into the house you bad me watch. *(Exit.)*

Vane. The devil he is!—Why, then I must consign my intended to him for one more night, and persuade my lord to delay our seizure till morning;—for, to meet with him, would certainly produce an agreement of all parties, and a marriage which would never en-

roll my name in the family pedigree, or Governor's will.
[Exit.

SCENE III.

CECILIA'S Dressing-room.—Candles burning, and her clothes scattered,

Enter WOODVILLE.

Thanks to that dear lawyer's lucky absence, I have a few happy hours, my love, to spend with thee—— (*Looks at her clothes.*) Already retired? sure I have not left my key in the garden gate.—No, here it is. (*Rings the bell, and takes off his sword, then throws himself into a chair.*) Nobody answer—I don't understand this—Perhaps I shall disturb her—I'll steal into her chamber—(*Goes off, and presently returns disordered.*) Not there! her clothes too, the same she had on last:—Oh, my heart misgives me!—But where are all the servants? (*Rings very violently, calling at the same time, BRIDGET! ROBERT! JACOB!*)

Enter BRIDGET, with her hat on.

—Bridget! what's become of your lady?

Brid. Really, sir, I can't say;—don't you know?

Wood. If I did, I shou'dn't have asked you.

Brid. (*After a little pause.*) Why, sure, sir, my lady has not run away? and yet something runs in my head, as if she had.—I thought that spark came for no good to-day.

Wood. What spark, girl?

Brid. Why, just after you went away, comes a young man, a monstrous genteel one, and very hand-

some too, I must needs say ; with fine dark eyes, and a fresh colour.

Wood. Damn his colour ! tell me his business.

Brid. So he axed for my lady, and would not tell me what he wanted ; I came with her, however, but she no sooner set eyes on him than she sent me out, which argufied no good, you'll say ; and, before I could possibly come back, though I ran as fast as ever my legs could carry me, he was gone, and she writing, and crying for dear life ;—but that was no news, so I did not mind it : and when she gave me leave to go to the play, thought no more harm than the child unborn.

Wood. It must be a scheme beyond all doubt, and I am the dupe of a dissembling, ungrateful—Oh, Cecilia ! (*Throws himself in a chair.*)

Brid. (*Softening her voice, and setting her dress.*) If I was as you, sir, I would not fret about her : there is not a lady in the land would slight a gentleman so handsome and sweet-tempered—I scorn to flatter, for my part.—Inferials mustn't direct their betters ; but, had I been in my lady's place, a king upon his throne would not have tempted me.—Handsome him that handsome does, say I ; and I am sure you did handsome by her ; for, if she could have eat gold, she might have had it.—He might take some notice truly.

(*Aside.*)

Wood. (*Starting up.*) Where was she writing ?

Brid. In the little drawing-room, sir.

[*Exit WOODVILLE.*]

BRIDGET *alone.*

This ridiculous love turns people's brains, I think.—I am sure I said enough to open his eyes :—but, may be, I don't look so handsome, because I am not so fine.—Hey,—a thought strikes me ! My lady is gone, that's plain.—Back she will not come, is as plain. (*Gathers together CECILIA's elegant clothes.*)

I'll put on these, and he'll think she gave 'em to me ; —then he may find out I am as pretty as she : if not, he and I are of very different opinions. [*Exit.*

Re-enter WOODVILLE more disordered.

Wood. Cruel, ungrateful, barbarous girl !—to forsake me in the very moment I was resolving to sacrifice every thing to her !—but 'tis just.—First dupes to the arts of man, the pupil soon knows how to foil him at his own weapons. Perhaps the discovery is fortunate. In a short time, I must have borne the whole disgrace of her ill conduct; and my father's resentment had the bitterest aggravation.—But is she indeed gone? and will continual to-morrows come, without one hope to render them welcome?

Enter JACOB.

Wood. Villain! where's your lady?

Jac. 'Las a deazy, how can I tell, zur?

Wood. Where are all your fellows?

Jac. Abroad, making haliday.

Wood. When did you go out? who gave you leave?

Jac. My leady, her own zelf; and I'll tell you how 'tware.—Arter dinner I geed her a noate; and, when zhe had red un, she axed me if zo be as how I had ever zeed the lions? Zoa I told her noa; nor no mour I never did.—Zoa zhe geed me half-a-crown, and bid me goa and make myself happy. I thought it were desperate koind of her; zoa I went and zeed the huge cretors: and arter, only stopped a bit to peap at the moniment, and hay my fortin tuold by conj'rer in the Old Bailey; and aw zaid——

Wood. What the devil does it signify to me what he said?—Hark'e, sir, I see in your face you know more of your mistress?

Jac. Dang it then my feace do lie hugely!

Wood. Tell me the whole truth, villain, or I'll stab you to the heart this instant! (*Draws his sword.*

Jac. (Kneels.) I wull, zur, indeed I wull; doan't ye terrify me zoa! I do forget every thing in the whole world.

Wood. Be sincere, and depend upon my rewarding you.

Jac. Why I wish I meay die this maument, if con-j'rer did not zey I should lose my pleast! nay, aw do verily think aw zaid zomething o' my being put in fear o' my loife. Loard knaws, I little thought how zoon his words would come to pass.

Wood. Will you dally?

Jac. Zoa, as I zaid, zur, when I comed huome again, I found all the duors aupen, and not a zoul to be zeed.

Wood. (Aside.) This fellow can never mean to impose on me, and I must think it a planned affair.—While I was in the country, Jacob, did your mistress see much company?

Jac. Cuompany!—noa, not to speak an—not gentlewomen.

Wood. Gentlewomen, blockhead! Why, had she any male visitors?

Jac. Anan!

Wood. I must brain thee at last, booby! Did any men come to see her then?

Jac. Oh yes, zur, yes—two gentlemen com'd almost every deay.

Wood. How! two gentlemen? I shall run distracted! Young and handsome?

Jac. Not auver young, zur, nor auver handsome; but drest muortal foine.

Wood. So they came almost every day?—Very pretty, indeed, Miss Cecilia!—Was you never called up while they staid?—Did they come together or alone?

Jac. Alone.

Wood. I thought as much; yes, I thought as much. But was you never called up, Jacob?

Jac. Yes, zur, when one aw um ware here one deay, I ware caaled up for zomething or other.

Wood. Well! why don't you go on? I am on the rack!

Jac. Don't ye look so muortal angry, then.

Wood. Well, well, I won't, my good fellow!—There's money for thy honesty.

Jac. Well;—there aw ware—

Wood. Speak out freely, you can tell me nothing worse than I imagine; you won't shock me in the least; not at all.

Jac. Well; theare aw ware playing on that theare music-thing like a coffin, and madam ware a zin ng to un like any blackbird—

Wood. A music-master!—Is that all, booby? (*Pushes him down.*)

Jac. Yes—but t' other, zur—

Wood. Ay, I had forgot;—what of him, good Jacob, what of him?

Jac. I ware never caaled up while aw steayed; zoa (I can't but zeay I had a curiosity to know what brought he here) one deay I peaped through the keay-hoole, and zeed un—(*Titters.*)—I shall ne'er forgeat—

Wood. Tell me this instant, or I shall burst with rage and suspense.

Jac. Screaping on a leetle viddle, no bigger than my hond; while madam ware a luolding out her quoats, and danzing all round the room, zoa—(*Mimicks the minuet awkwardly.*)

Wood. Why, I believe the impudent bumkin dares to jest with my misery! and yet I have no other avenue; for the rest I fear are knaves, and he seems only a fool—And are these all that came, Jacob?

Jac. Noa, thare ware one moare, zur; a leetle mon in a black quoaat—but aw only cuomed now and tan.

Wood. A disguise, no doubt! Yes, yes, they were artful enough!

Jac. And zoa, arter he'd done wi' my leady, aw did zhut hiz zelf up wi' Bridget; and zoa I axed her all about un, and zhe zaid az how aw coomed to teeach madam to turn themmin great round balls, all bleue, and red, and yaller, that do stond by the books, and larned zhe to wroite——

Wood. Yes, yes, Mrs Bridget was in all her secrets, I don't doubt.—If that fellow in black comes here again, keep him, if you value your life, and send for me.—I know not what to do or think, and must renew my search, though hopeless of success. [*Exit.*]

JACOB alone.

Jac. Dang it! but he's in a desperate teaking!—Rabbit me, but I ware muortally afeard aw un too, for aw flurished hiz zword az yeazy az I cou'd a cudgel.—I do think conjuror moight as well ha' tould me madam would ha' run away, while aw ware about it, and then I moight ha' run'd away first. (*Exit.*)

Enter GREY.

Grey. At length I have gained entrance into this house of shame, which now, alas! contains my darling Cecilia—plunged in vice, and lost to every sentiment I spent so many anxious years in implanting. This does not seem to be the abode of pleasure, nor have I met a single being.

WOODVILLE entering behind, sees GREY, and drawing his sword, flies at and seizes him.

Wood. Ha!—a man!—and in black, as Jacob said.—Villain, this moment is your last!

Grey. (*Turning suddenly upon him.*) Yes, young seducer, add to the daughter's ruin, the father's murder!—Stab my heart, as you already have my happiness!

Wood. Alas! Was this her visitor? I dare not speak to him.

Grey. Embosomed by affluence, exalted by title, peace still shall be far from thy heart ; for thou, with the worst kind of avarice, hast, by specious pretences, wrested from poverty its last dear possession—virtue.

Wood. Pierced to the soul, as I am, by your reproaches, I dare appeal to Cecilia herself for a testimony of my contrition!—How shall I convince you ?

Grey. Hardly by a life of repentance.—But I debase myself to exchange a word with you. Give me back my Cecilia!—Ruined as she is, I yet would recover her!—Give her back then to a father you first taught her to fear, and an habitation too humble for any but the good to be happy in.

Wood. Alas, sir! Can you trifle with my misery?—Do you give her back to the wretch who cannot survive her loss! Let me owe her hand to your bounty, though her heart to her own!—Did you know what this elopement of her's has cost me—

Grey. Oh! most accomplished villain!—but think not to dupe me too!

Wood. Who but you can have robbed me of her since morning?

Grey. Shallow artifice!

Wood. Hear me, sir! and even believe me, when I solemnly swear I have deeply repented my crime, and offered her all the reparation in my power;—but, since then—

Grey. What since then?

Wood. Either by your means, or some other, she has fled!

Grey. Impossible!

Wood. 'Tis too true, by heaven!

Grey. Perhaps, while you are thus ingeniously deluding me, she indeed flies.—Study some other deception, while I examine the whole house, for nothing else can convince me.

(*Exit.*

WOODVILLE *alone.*

Surely this injured venerable man was sent by heaven to complete my misfortunes!—My passions subside, but only into a vague horror and despondency, even more dreadful!—If with rash hand she has shortened her days, what remain of mine will be, indeed, all her father predicts—(*Walking by the toilet.*)—Ha, a letter!

Re-enter GREY.

Grey. A total loneliness in the house!

Wood. Now, sir, be convinced.—I have just found a letter from her.

Grey. This cannot be the invention of a moment;—let me read it—it is, indeed, her hand—(*Opens and reads it.*) “Receive this as my last farewell.—Providence has unexpectedly sent me a friend, whose protection I dare accept; and time may perhaps subdue a passion which seems interwoven with my being.—Forget me, I entreat: and seek that happiness with another, I can never hope to bestow or partake.—Consoled only by reflecting, that the grief my error occasions is inferior to that I should have felt, had I, by an ungenerous use of my power, made you, in turn, my victim.—Once more, adieu!—All search will certainly be fruitless.

P. S. In the cabinet you will find your valuable presents; and the key is in a dressing box.”

[WOODVILLE *snatches the letter, and bursts into tears.*]

Grey. Cecilia! I may say, with tears of joy, thou art, indeed, my daughter! more dear (if possible) than ever! A daughter monarchs might contend for, though thy weak father abjures thee!—May the friend you have found have a heart but like your own!—For you, young man—But I leave you to your an-

guish ; the loss of such a woman is a sufficient punishment.

Wood. Stay, sir ! (*Rises.*) by your holy profession, I conjure you stay !—Plunge me not into total despair !—Though without a clue to her asylum, I would fain believe my heart will lead me to it ; and let me then hope you will bestow her on me ?

Grey. There is a something in your manner, young gentleman, that affects me.—I have been young, wild, and extravagant, myself ; and, what is more strange, have not forgot I was so : my own experience proves reformation possible ; act up to her, and atone your error.

Wood. I will endeavour it, sir ; and, oh ! could those who yet but waver, know what has passed in my heart during the last hour, who would dare to deviate !

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

CECILIA'S House.

BRIDGET *dressed in CECILIA'S clothes, mixed with every thing vulgar and tawdry.*

Brid. So—I am ready against our gentleman comes.—Deuce on him, to run away last night, the moment

I was drest—and with an inferial fellow too !—Lard, how can people of quality demean themselves by keeping company with inferials !—However, one thing I am sure of, he's too much on the fidgets to stay long away from our house ; and, in the mean while, I can entertain myself extremely well. (*Sits down to the toilet.*)

Jac. (Without.) I tell ye, my leady's not at huome.

Gov. I tell you, I won't take your word for it ;—so come, my lord, and see.

Brid. Hey-day, my lord !—What's the news now, I wonder ?

Enter LORD GLENMORE and the Governor ; both stop short.

Gov. Oh, I thought madam had learnt enough of the ton to lie by proxy.

Brid. Dear heart !—I am all of a twitteration !—Who can these be ?—That's my lord, for certain !

Ld Glen. The vulgarity of the wench is astonishing !

Gov. Um—why, a little gawky, or so—there's no denying it.—(*Aside.*) Here's a pretty discovery now, after all my projects !—Thank fortune, the secret is yet my own, though—

Ld Glen. (Advancing to her.) I ought to beg your excuse, madam, for so abrupt an intrusion ; but the opportunity, and so fair a temptation, will, I flatter myself, be a sufficient apology.

Brid. (Aside.) He takes me for my lady, that's a sure thing !—Oh, this is charming !—You need not make no 'pologys, my lord ;—inferials never knows how to suspect people of quality ; but I understands good breeding better.

Ld Glen. (Aside.) Why, what a barn-door mawkin it is !—Your politeness, madam, can only be equalled by your beauty !

Brid. Dear heart, my lord, you flatter me !—

Won't you please to sit? (*Waits affectedly till they consent to seat themselves.*)

Ld Glen. (*To the Governor.*) Surely, by using my title, she knows me!

Gov. Zounds! I have a great mind to make her know me!—Od! I shall never be able to contain!

Ld Glen. I was afraid, madam, I should prove an unwelcome guest—but beauty like your's—

Brid. Does your lordship think I so very handsome then!—Lord, how lucky was my dressing myself!

Ld Glen. (*Aside.*) Affected idiot!—I was afraid, madam, too, of meeting Woodville here. (*Aside.*) I know not what to say to her.

Brid. He has not been here this morning; but, if he had, he knows better than to ax arter my company, I do assure you, my—lordship.

Ld Glen. I have been told he intends marrying you; what a pity to monopolize such merit!

Brid. If he has any such kind intention, 'tis more than I knows of, I assure you.

Ld Glen. His keeping that wise resolution from you, is some little comfort, however.

Brid. But, I promise ye, I shall make a rare person of quality; for I loves, cards, coaches, dancing, and dress, to my very heart—nothing in the world better—but blindman's-buff. I had some thoughts of taking a trip to Sadler's-Wells or Fox-Hall, but they don't begin till five o'clock.

Gov. (*Aside.*) Ha! ha!—though she can hardly spell out the ten commandments, she could break every one with as much ease and impudence, as if she had been bred in the circle of St James's.

Ld Glen. But, madam, you know, allowing Woodville willing to marry you, it is not in his power while his father lives, without forfeiting his fortune, the value of which you doubtless understand?

Brid. Oh yes, yes, for sartin, my lord.

Ld Glen. Who knows, too, how far an incensed parent may carry his resentment?—He might find means to entrap and punish you.

Brid. Ha, ha, ha!—he entrap me!—that would be a good jest!—No, no, I have more of the lady of quality than to be so easily catch'd.

Gov. (*Mimicking her.*) He, he, he!—that is the only particular in which you have nothing at all of the lady of quality.

Ld Glen. With me you may share a higher rank and larger fortune without those fears—I am of an age—

Brid. Yes, one may see that without being a conjuror—Why, will you marry me, my lord?

Ld Glen. Convince me that you don't love this Woodville, and I know not how far my passion may carry me.

Brid. Love him!—Do you think I knows no more of high life than that comes to?—To be sure, he is a sweet pretty man, and all that—but as to love, I loves nobody half so well as myself!

Ld Glen. Upon my soul, I believe you; and wish he had the whole benefit of the declaration.—(*To the Governor.*) Her ingratitude is as shocking as her ignorance, and Bridewell too gentle a punishment.

Gov. Then build a Bridewell large enough to contain the whole sex; for the only difference between her and the rest is—this country mawkin tells what the town-bred misses conceal.

Ld Glen. Why, governor, you are as testy as if you had the care of her education.

Gov. I the care!—Zounds, what I say is merely from friendship to your lordship.—I hate to see you deceive yourself.—(*Aside.*) Surely he can never suspect! (*BRIDGET is employed in cramming trinkets from the dressing-table into her pockets.*)

Brid. Now I am ready to go, my lord.

Ld Glen. Reflect, madam; it would hurt me to

have you say I deceived you—if you should repent—I am much afraid you will.

Brid. What, when I am a lady? Oh, I'll venture that, and attend you.

Gov. (*Roughly snatching her other hand.*) To where you little dream of, you vain, affected, presuming, ignorant baggage.

Brid. Hey-day!—my lord!

Ld Glen. Appeal not to me, base woman!—Know I am the father of that poor dupe, Woodville.

Brid. Dear heart! be ye indeed?—What will become of me, then?

Ld Glen. And, as a moderate punishment for your hypocrisy, ambition, and ingratitude, sentence you to be shut up for life in a monastery.

Brid. O lord! among monsters?

Gov. No, ignoramus!—No, among nuns; though they are but monsters in human nature either.

Brid. What! where they'll cut off my hair, and make me wear sackcloth next my skin?

Gov. Yes, if they leave you any skin at all.

Brid. Oh dear, dear, dear! (*Sobs and groans.*) Upon my bended knees, I do beg you won't send me there!—Why, I shall go melancholy—I shall make away with myself for sartin; and my ghost will appear to you all in white.

Gov. All in black, I rather think; for the devil a speck of white is there in your whole composition.

Ld Glen. Your conduct, wretch! justifies a severer sentence.—To seduce him from his duty was crime enough!

Brid. Who, I seduce him? I did not, my lord—indeed I did not.

Ld Glen. Have you not owned—

Brid. No, indeed, no; that I wished to take my lady's place, I believe I did own—

Gov. Ha, ha, ha! Very prettily devised, faith, for a young beginner!—Come, come, (*Chuckling her un-*

der the chin.) we must give you credit for this, Miss—Your lady! Ha, ha, ha!

Ld Glen. Shallow subterfuge!—

Enter VANE and the Slaves.

Vane, is all ready?—Seize this woman, and observe my orders!

Brid. Ah, dear heart! I shall die away if the blacks do but touch me—Indeed you do mistake!—I be no lady—I be only Bridget!

Gov. I would give ten thousand pounds that you were only Bridget, you artful puss!—Zounds! though I could one moment strangle the pug's face in her own necklace, yet the next I can hardly prevail on myself to punish her—What the devil had I now to do in England? or what the devil had I ever to do in Wales?—Phew! I could dethrone fifty nabobs without half the fatigue and anxiety of this moment.—Take her away, however! and let us try how Miss likes riding out in her own coach.

[*VANE and the slaves seize her; she screams out, and catches LORD GLENMORE'S coat, falling on her knees.—JACOB enters, her back to him.*

Jac. Why, what a dickens be ye all at here?—Zoa, what's my lady theare?

Ld Glen. See there now—Oh, the artful Jezebel!

Brid. Oh, Jacob!—Why, don't ye see I am Bridget? Pray satisfy my lord, here.

Jac. Why, be ye Bridget?—Never trust me else!

Gov. Here's a fool of t'other sex now, can hardly take a hint though so plainly given him!—Thanks to the natural difference, for art is nature in woman.

(*LD GLEN. draws him aside.*

Jac. Auh, Bridget, Bridget! Where didst thee get theesum foin claws?—Noa, noa, as theest brew'd, thee meay'st beake.

Brid. Oh, do you take pity on me!—Why, they

be going to carry me to some outlandish place, and make a nunnery of me !

Jac. A nunnery !—What's that ? any thing Cris-tin ?—Well, if I do spake to um, will ye ha'e me ?

Brid. Oh, yes, yes, yes !

Ld Glen. Brother, I shall leave you to the completion of this affair—I am sick to the soul of the gawky——

Gov. Yes, yes ; I don't doubt it—I don't doubt it.

Ld Glen. (*To VANE.*) Convey her to my house, and lock her up in one of the lofts over the stables.——Go the back way, and even the family need know nothing of the matter.—The chaplain will provide a licence, and be ready.—Courage, my lad, and depend upon my gratitude ! [*Exit.*

Gov. Will you take her, or no ?—I shall never be able to stifle my agitation ; and burst with rage if I show it.—

Jac. Why, zure, zure, ye won't carr' away our Bridget ?

Vane. Ha, ha, ha !

Gov. Oh, she has beat her meaning into thy thick scull at last !—Pr'ythee, keep thy blockhead out of my way, if thou mean'st to keep it on thy own shoulders.

Jac. Why, be ye in arnest then ? Dear heart alive ! Why, this is cousin Bridget !

Brid. Only send for Mr Woodville.

Gov. Prettily devised again !—Ha, ha, ha !—Dost think, my little dear, we have lived three times as long as your ladyship to learn a quarter as much !—Send for Mr Woodville, hey ?—No, -no ; you won't find us quite so simple.

Jac. Oh doan't ye, doan't ye carr' off zhe, or if ye wull, do pray take I.

Vane. Yes, you would be a choice piece of lumber, truly.

Gov. Drag her away this moment.

Brid. Oh, dear, oh dear! to be hanged at last for another's crime is all that vexes me!

[*They carry her off; Governor follows.*]

SCENE II.

MISS MORTIMER'S Apartment.

CECILIA enters, and sits down to embroidery.

How fond, how weak, how ungrateful, are our hearts!—Mine still will presumptuously fancy this house its home, and ally itself to every one to whom Woodville is dear.

LORD GLENMORE enters.

Cec. Oh heavens, my lord!—How unlucky!—if I go, he may find the captain with Miss Mortimer!

Ld Glen. You see, madam, you have only to retire to engage us to pursue you even to rudeness.—But, tell me, can it be your own choice to punish us so far as to prefer solitude to our society?

Cec. I know myself too well, my lord, to receive distinctions of which I am unworthy:—yet think not, therefore, I fail in respect.

Ld Glen. But is that charming bosom susceptible of nothing beyond respect?—Why is it capable of inspiring a passion it cannot participate?

Cec. Your goodness, my lord—my profound veneration, will always attend you—but the more generously you are inclined to forget what is due to yourself, the more strongly it is impressed on my memory.

Ld Glen. Were what you say true, the bounties of nature atone amply to you for the parsimony of fortune, nor would your want of every other advantage lessen your merit, or my sense of it.

Cec. (Aside.) Had he thought thus a few months since, how happy had I now been ! Your approbation at once flatters and serves me, by justifying Miss Mortimer's protection of me.

Ld Glen. Her partiality for you does her more honour than it can ever do you advantage. But you must tell me how she gained first the happiness of knowing you ?

Cec. My—my lord, by a misfortune so touching—

Ld Glen. Nay, I would not distress you neither ; yet I own, madam, I wish to make a proposal worth a serious answer ; but ought first to know, why you affect a mystery ? Tell me then, my dear, every incident of your life, and I will raise you to a title, I may without vanity say, many have aspired to !

Cec. You oppress my very soul, my lord ! But, alas ! unconquerable obstacles deprive me for ever of that title. Neither would I obtain it by alienating such a son from such a father.

Ld Glen. Put him entirely out of the question ; the meanness of his conduct acquits me to myself. Do you know, madam, he has resolved to marry a creature of low birth, illiterate, vulgar, and impudent ? And, to complete her perfections, she has been his mistress at least !

Cec. Surely he knows, and purposely shocks me thus. (*Aside.*)

Ld Glen. But your integrity doesn't render you less amiable in my eyes ; it greatly enhances every other merit. As to this wretch, I have her in my power, and shall make her dearly repent.

Cec. Then I am lost indeed ! (*Aside.*)—You have, my lord, though I know not how, discovered—(*Rises in confusion.*)

Ld Glen. (*Rises, taking snuff, without looking at her.*) Oh, nothing more easy, madam; I had him carefully traced to her house; and, during his absence, took servants, and forced her away.

Cec. (*Aside.*) That, however, cannot be me: every word seems to add to a mystery I dare not inquire into.

Ld Glen. But why waste one precious moment on such an animal? What are these unconquerable obstacles?

Cec. Spare me, my lord; your indulgence induces me to try again to soften your resolutions respecting your son: deprived of the weak, the guilty, the miserable wretch you justly condemn, a little time will no doubt incline him to his duty. I should have your pardon to solicit, my lord, but that your own openness authorizes mine.

Ld Glen. But can you, who so powerfully plead the cause of another, be deaf to the sighs of a man who adores you? who offers you a rank——

Cec. Be satisfied, my lord, with knowing I have all that esteem your merit claims, which influences me beyond every casual advantage.

Ld Glen. But, madam——

Cec. Alas! my lord!—(*Bursts into tears, aside.*)—Be silent, if possible, both pride and virtue. I have deserved, and will submit to it—yet surely the bitterness of this moment expiates all past offences.

(*Exit.*)

Ld Glen. Amiable creature! what an amazing elegance of mind and person! Tears were her only answers to my questions, and blushes to my looks, yet these only heighten a curiosity they have softened into love.

(*Exit.*)

SCENE III.

WOODVILLE'S *Apartment.*WOODVILLE *alone.*

Wood. No intelligence of my Cecilia yet!—Were I only assured of her safety, it would be some consolation.

Enter JACOB.

Jac. Zur, zur!—I do meake so bowld as to ax to spake to you.

Wood. Jacob! my honest fellow, the very sight of thee revives my hopes, and sets my heart in motion!—Well, what's the news?

Jac. Zurprising news indeed, zur!—Loord, I thought I should never meat wi' ye;—I comed to your lodgings twice, and ye wan't up.

Wood. Up! 'Sdeath, you ignorant booby! why didn't you order them to rouse me that moment?

Jac. Loord, zur! why your gentleman (as they do caal un) ware so terrable foine, I ware afeard of affronting un!

Wood. Plague on the stupidity of both, say I!—But what's all this to the purpose? The news? the news?

Jac. Las-a-deasy! mortal bad news, indeed!—

Wood. You tedious blockhead! is your lady returned?

Jac. Noa, zur. (*Shaking his head very mournfully.*)

Wood. (Aside.) The horrid forebodings of my heart recur; yet surely she could not be so desperate!—Shocking as the suspense is, I more dread the certainty.—Speak, however, my good fellow! (*JACOB wipes his eyes.*)—I shall ever value your sensibility.—Tell me then the simple truth, whatever it may be?

Jac. I wull, zur, I wull.—There has com'd two foine gentlemen, wi' zwords by their zides, just for all the world like yourn—

Wood. Well, and what did these gentlemen say?

Jac. Why they went up stears, willy, nilly, and carr'd off—our Bridget. (*Bursts out a crying.*

Wood. You impudent, ignorant clown! I'll give you cause for your tears. (*Shakes him.*

Jac. Loord! Loord!—do ye ha a little christin commiseration—Well, if ever I do cuome nigh ye again, I do wish ye may break every buone in my skin.

Wood. (Walking about in a rage.) To insult me with your own paltry love affairs! These great and mighty gentlemen were only constables, I dare swear, and your fears converted their staves to swords.

Jac. Ay, but that an't the worst neither. I do verily think my turn wull come next; can't sleep in my bed for thinking on't, nor enjoy a meal's meat:—zo, except you do bring your zword, and cuome and live in our houze, I woll gou out on't, that's a zure thing; for I had rather sceare craws at a graat a deay all my loife long, than bide here to be so ter-rifoid.

Wood. Sceare craws truly? why the craws will sceare you, ye hen-hearted puppy!—There, teake that, (*Gives him money.*) and guo home, or to the devil, so you never fall in my way again.

Jac. Zome faulk that I do know wull zee the black gentleman first, 'tis my belief—zoa I had best keep out o' his woy too.

Enter HARCOURT.

Har. Woodville, what's the matter?—Why you will raise the neighbourhood.

JACOB returns.

Jac. Here's a peaper housemaid do zend you, wi' her humble duty; but, if zo be it do put ye in another desperate teaking, I do huope ye wull zend for zhe to beat, and not i.—Loord! Loord! what wull becuome of me in this woide world of London!

(Exit JACOB.)

Har. Ha! ha! ha! he is a choice fellow!

Wood. A heart oppressed with its own feelings fears every thing. I have hardly courage to open a letter without an address.

Har. Come, come, give it me then. Hey, what? confusion!—Was ever any thing so unlucky?

(Attempts to tear it.)

Wood. *(Snatches it from him.)* Ha! it is important then?

Har. Why will you invent torments for yourself? *(Aside.)*—My own letter, by every thing careless!—Here's a stroke—

Wood. *(Reads in a broken voice and manner.)* “Woodville on the brink of marriage—You will be disengaged—A nobleman—*(Damnation!)*—Heart and fortune at her feet”—I'll let his soul out there! Hell and furies!—but I will find him, if money—Never will I close my eyes till—Oh Cecilia—*(Throws himself into a seat.)*

Har. This is the most unforeseen—I know not what to say to him—Pr'ythee, Woodville, do not sacrifice so many reasonable presumptions in her favour, to a paper that may be a forgery, for aught you know!

Wood. Oh Charles! that I cou'd think so!—but I

have seen the villain's execrable hand somewhere !
Did you never see the hand ?

Har. Um—I can't but own I have—What the devil shall I say to him. *(Aside.)*

Enter the Governor.

Gov. Woodville, my dear boy ! I am come to have a little talk with thee.—Charles ! don't run away !—you are in all your cousin's secrets.

Wood. What should possess this tiresome mortal to come here ?—I should have waited on you in half an hour, sir.

Gov. Ay, and that's what I wanted to avoid :—The more I talk to your father, Frank, the more I find him fixed on the match with his Miss Mortimer ! Nay, he tells me he will have you married this very day.

Wood. That's mighty probable, in the humour I am in.

Gov. Ah, Frank ! the girl I offer thee—

Wood. Is no more agreeable to me than her you despise.

Gov. How do you know that, peppercorn ?—How do you know that ?—Od, I could tell you—

Wood. And to tell you my full mind, sir, I had rather make myself miserable to gratify my father, than any other man.

Gov. Od ! thou art so obstinate, boy, I can't help loving thee.—*(Aside.)* I don't see why I am obliged to know his Miss is my daughter—I have a great mind to own what we have done with her ; and, if he will marry, e'en take care nobody hinders him ! then, trump up a farge about forgiving them :—and yet it goes against my conscience to punish the puppy for life, though he has punished me pretty sufficiently, by the Lord Harry.

Har. I don't like this affair at all, and tremble for my Sophia, when I see this odd soul so inveterate against her.

Gov. (*To WOODVILLE.*) Well, my lad! do you know I am as deep in all your secrets as your favourite valet de chambre?

Wood. I don't understand you, sir.

Gov. Pho, pho, pho! keep that face till I shew thee one as solemn as my lord's. Why should not you please yourself, and marry your Miss, instead of your father's?

Both. Astonishing!

Gov. Od, if you turn out the honest fellow I take you for, I know a pretty round sum, an onion, and a black coat may one day or other entitle you to; so never mind Lord Gravity's resentment.

Wood. I act from better motives, sir, and were unworthy your wealth could it tempt me to disobey the best of fathers.

Gov. (*Passionately.*) Why then marry Miss Mortimer, and oblige him: take a back seat in your own coach, get a family of pale-faced brats, born with ostrich feathers on their heads; and hate away a long life with all due decorum!—Zounds, here's a fellow more whimsical than—even myself!—Yesterday you would have the puss, spite of every body; but you no sooner find it in your power to oblige your best friend, by humouring your inclinations, than, lo! you are taken with a most violent fit of duty and submission!—Od, you don't know what you have lost by it!—But, since you are bent on crossing me, I'll cross you, and once for all too—My secret shall henceforth be as impenetrable as the philosopher's stone.—Ay, stare as you please, I'll give you more years than you have seen days to guess it in. (*Exit.*

Har. What this uncle of our's can mean, is quite beyond my guess!

Wood. What signifies seeking to expound by reason, actions in which it had no share?—His brain is indubitably touched! But Cecilia lies heavy on my heart, and excludes every other thought.

Har. Time may explain the secret of that letter, which, I will lay my life, she despises :—A woman who did not would have kept it from your hands.

Wood. That's true, indeed !—If I wrong her, and this was but an insult,—there is a noble sincerity in her own letter which sets suspicion at defiance.—If he stumbled on one word of truth during this visit, the crisis of my fate approaches. Oh, wherever thou art, if the exalted being I will still hope my Cecilia, thou shalt know I have at least deserved thee !

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

A mean Room ; Boots, Bridles, &c. hanging all round.

BRIDGET sitting very mournfully, her fine clothes in great disorder.—A table by her, with a small roll, a glass of water, an old dogs-eared book, and a bit of looking-glass.

Brid. Dear heart ! dear heart ! what a miserable time have I passed ! and, where I be to pass my whole life, my lord here only knows !—I have not much stomach indeed ; neither have I much breakfast. (*Eats a bit of bread, and bursts into tears.*

Enter the Governor.

Gov. Had I more sins to answer for, than a college of Jesuits, I surely expiate them all, by going through a purgatory in this life beyond what they have invented for the other. This vulgar minx of mine haunts my imagination in every shape but that I hoped to see her in; I dare hardly trust myself to speak to her!—Od, I would not have the extirpation of the whole female sex depend upon my casting vote, while I am in this humour!

Brid. Mercy on me! here's that cross old gentleman again! What will become of me?—Do, pray, strange sir! be so generous as to tell me what is next to be done with me?

Gov. Why, just whatever I please, you audacious baggage!—(*Aside.*) Od, now I think on't, I have a great mind to try a few soft words, and dive into all the secrets of the little ignoramus.—Come, suppose I had a mind to grant you your freedom, how would you requite me?

Brid. Dear heart! why I'd love you for ever and ever.

Gov. Zounds, that's a favour I could very readily dispense with!—and yet 'tis natural to the poor wench.—Ah! if thou had'st been a good girl, thou had'st been a happy one.—Hark ye, miss! confess all your sins; that's the only way to escape, I promise you! and, if you conceal the least, I'll do—I don't know what I'll do to you.

Brid. I will, I will, sir, indeed, as I hope to be married.

Gov. Married, you slut! bad as that is, it's too good for you.—Come, tell me all your adventures.—Describe the behaviour of the young villain who seduced you.—Where did you see him first?

Brid. Ugh, ugh!—At church, sir.

Gov. At church, quotha—a pretty place to com-

mence an intrigue in!—and how long was it before you came to this admirable agreement?

Brid. Umh—Why—Sunday was Midsummer-eve, —and Sunday after was madam's wedding-day,—and Monday was our fair, and——

Gov. Oh curse your long histories!—and, what then said Woodville?

Brid. Oh, Lord, nothing at all—why, it warn't he.

Gov. No!—(*Ready to burst with passion.*) Who, who, who? tell me that, and quite distract me!

Brid. Timothy Hobbs, 'squire's gardener.

Gov. An absolute clown—(*Walks about half groaning with rage and disappointment.*) Who, oh! who would be a father?—I could laugh,—cry,—die,—with shame and anger!—Since the man, who corrupted, left her only one virtue, would he had deprived her of that too!—Oh, that she had but skill enough to lie well!

Brid. Whether I can or no, I'll never speak truth again, that's a sure thing!—What do I get by it, or any poor souls of the female kind?

Gov. I am incapable of thinking;—every plan, every resource, thus overturned.—I must be wiser than all the world!—This fool's head of mine must take to teaching, truly! as if I could eradicate the stamp of nature, or regulate the senses, by any thing but reason.—Don't pipe, baggage, to me!—you all can do that, when too late:—when I have considered whether I shall hang myself or not, I'll let you know whether I shall tuck you up along with me, you little wretch, you! (*Exit.*)

BRIDGET *alone.*

Well, sure I have at last guessed where I am shut up!—It must be Bedlam; for the old gentleman is out of his mind, that's a sure thing.

Enter VANE.

Vane. Ha, ha, ha! my future father-in-law seems to have got a quietus of my intended; and, faith, so wou'd any man who was not in love with a certain forty thousand;—to be sure, in plain English, she is a glorious mawkin!—(*To her.*)—Well, madam, how are you pleased with your present mode of living?

Brid. Living, do you call it?—I think, 'tis only starving.—Why, I shall eat my way through the walls very shortly.

Vane. Faith, miss, they use you but so so, that's the truth on't: and I must repeat, even to your face, what I said to my lord, that your youth, beauty, and accomplishments, deserve a better fate.

Brid. Dear heart! Bedlam, did I say, I was in? why, I never knew a more sensibler, genteeler, prettier sort of a man in my life—(*Aside.*)—I am sure, sir, if I was to study seven years, I should never know what I have done to discommode them, not I.

Vane. Oh lard, my dear! only what is done every day by half your sex without punishment—however, you are to suffer for all, it seems.—You see your fare for life!—a dungeon, coarse rags, and the same handsome allowance of bread and water twice a-day.

Brid. Oh, dear me!—Why, I shall be an otomy in a week!

Vane. And an old black to guard you, more sulky and hideous than those in the Arabian Nights Entertainments.

Brid. Why, sure they will let you come and see me, sir? I shall certainly swoond away every time I look at that nasty old black.

Vane. This is the last time your dungeon (which your presence renders a palace to me) will ever be open to one visitor—unless—unless—I cou'd contrive—but no, it would be my ruin: yet who wouldn't venture something for such a charming creature? you

could endear even ruin.—Tell me, then, what reward you would bestow on a man who ventured all to give you freedom?

Brid. Nay I don't know; you're such a dear sweet soul, I sha'n't stand with you for a trifle.

Vane. Ahey! Miss will be as much too complying in a minute.—Well, then, my dear, I must marry you, or you will still be in the power of your enemies.

Brid. Hey?—what? do I hear rightly? marry me! —(*Aside.*)—Why, this will be the luckiest day's work I ever did!—Nay, sir, if you should be so generous, I hope I shall live to make you amends.

Vane. (*Aside.*) The only amends you can make me, is by dying—and now, my dear, I will own to you, I have the license in my pocket; and my lord as eager as myself.—Our chaplain will do us the favour with more expedition than he says grace before meat!—Well done, Vane! egad, thy lucky star predominates!—(*Aside—takes her arm.*)

Brid. Surely my locking up does end very comical.
[*Exeunt arm in arm.*]

SCENE II.

The Drawing-room.

MISS MORTIMER and CAPTAIN HARCOURT.

Miss Mor. Woodville is now with his father, and both in the decisive mood.—Oh, Charles! as the moment approaches nearer, your influence becomes insensibly less powerful:—the frantic fits of the Governor; the solemn absurdity of my lord,—but, above all, the behaviour of Woodville, hurts and alarms me!

—still cautious not to offend his father, he had tried every way to extort the refusal from me; but, by a pardonable equivocation, I left him hopeless, and assured him I should, to the utmost of my power, obey my benefactor—Why, why, did you marry one who could give you nothing but her heart!

Har. I shall not answer, till you can name me an equivalent—Trust to my management, my dear Sophia.—I still flatter myself one storm will settle the tenor of our lives—If not, while acquitted to heaven, the world, and ourselves, we may struggle with spirit against fortune; and sometimes owe our dearest enjoyments to her fluctuations.

Miss Mor. By sentiments like these you won my very soul; and to retain for ever a heart so invaluable, I have ventured the displeasure of my benefactor: but our hearts will not always follow the lead of our reason; nor, when I consider the cause, can I repent the deviation of mine.

Har. Think, if you pity yourself, what you can give to Cecilia; and fortify her mind against too strong a sense of her frailty. For my part, I must watch whatever is going on.

Miss Mor. So you leave me out of the plot?—Well, if it ends happily, I shall be contented; and, like the world, measuring your merit by your success, will declare you a most inimitable schemer.—Adieu!

Har. Nay, stay a moment.

Miss Mor. Not for the world; for here comes your uncle, with a face more petrifying than Medusa's. •

(*Exit.*)

Enter the Governor, musing.

Gov. I have lived fifty-eight years, five months, and certain odd days, to find out I am a fool at last; but I will live as many more, before I add the discovery that I am a knave too.

Har. What the devil can he be now hatching?—mischief, I fear.

Gov. Dear Fortune! let me escape this once undiscovered, and I compound for all the rest.—Charles! the news of the house? for the politics of this family are employment for every individual in it.

Har. *Bella, horrida bella*, sir!—My lord is determined to bring his son's duty to an immediate test—(*Aside.*) Thanks to his friend's schemes and his mistress's beauty.

Gov. What poor malicious wretches are we by nature!—Zounds, if I could not find in my heart to rejoice at thinking every one here will be as mortified and disappointed as a certain person that shall be nameless!—So, so, here they come, faith, to argue the point in open court.

Enter LORD GLENMORE, followed by WOODVILLE.

Ld Glen. Without this proof of your obedience, all you can urge, sir, is ineffectual.

Wood. While obedience was possible, I never swerved, my lord; but, when you command me to make myself wretched, a superior duty cancels that:—already bound by a voluntary, an everlasting vow, I cannot break it without offending heaven, nor keep it without offending you.

Gov. (*Aside.*) What's this?—Chopped about again!

Wood. Did you once know the incomparable merits of my love, even your lordship's prejudices must give way to your reason.

Ld Glen. Mere dotage.—Doesn't her conduct equally evince her folly and depravity?

Wood. Covered, as I ought to be, with confusion and remorse, I will own she was seduced and deceived.

Gov. (*Aside.*) Ah, poor boy!—one of the two was woefully deceived, sure enough.

Ld Glen. Oh, your conscience may be very easy

on that account; it could not require much art to deceive such an idiot.

Gov. No, no, my lord! Why paint the devil blacker than he is? Not an idiot neither.

Wood. Sir, my father's freedom of speech I must endure;—but your's—

Gov. You must endure too, young sir, or I shall bite my tongue off.

Wood. But, my lord! that dear unhappy girl is no longer a subject of debate.—She evidently proves her merit by her flight.

Ld Glen. Would you make a virtue from not doing ill, when it is no longer in your power?—Woodville! I was once weak enough to believe indulgence the surest way of obtaining your duty and esteem.—My eyes are at last opened.—Miss Mortimer is worthy a better husband; but you are her's, or no son of mine.—I solemnly promised this to her dying father, and will acquit myself at all events.

Wood. Can you resolve to sacrifice me to a promise made before we could judge of each other?—You never felt, sir, the compulsion you practise.—Will you dissolve the first band of morality, and see your highly-estimated title end in me? for never will I on these terms continue it.

Ld Glen. I almost wish I never had continued it.—*(Walks in anger.)* I am determined, Woodville! and nothing but Miss Mortimer's refusal can break the match.

Wood. I shall not put that in her power, my lord. Permit me to tell you, no son was ever more sensible of a father's kindness: but, if I can purchase its continuance only with my honour and my happiness, it would be too dearly bought.

Ld Glen. 'Tis well, sir.—I have listened to you sufficiently. Now hear me. Know, this worthless wretch you prefer to your duty, is in my power; nay, in this house.

Har. (Aside.) The devil she is ! How in the name of ill-luck should he find that out ?—My fine scheme entirely blown up, by Jupiter !

Wood. Why play thus upon me, my lord ?—Her letter——

Ld Glen. What, has she wrote to you ?—That I was not aware of, nor indeed suspected she could write.

Gov. No, not so ignorant as that neither. I ordered she should write too.

Ld Glen. You ordered she should write !—let me tell you, sir, it was wronging my confidence !

Gov. No, I did not order she should write ;—I mean,—I mean,—Zounds ! I don't know what I mean !

Wood. So it seems, indeed, since hardly half an hour ago my uncle himself persuaded me to marry my love.

Gov. Here's a cursed affair now !

Ld Glen. Can this be possible ? Let me tell you, Governor, if, presuming upon your wealth, you play a double part in my family——

Gov. Zounds ! nobody knows his own part in your family that I see ! and this fellow, too, to tease me, whom I loved above all in it. Why, I spoke entirely from regard to him. If since then I have discovered a bumpkin was before-hand with him in the possession of his miss——

Wood. If any one, besides yourself, sir, durst tell such a falsehood, it would cost a life.

Gov. Yes ; and if any one beside myself durst tell me such a truth, it would cost a soul perhaps. (*Exit.*)

Har. This is more unintelligible than all the rest.

Ld Glen. To end these altercations ;—upon yourself, Woodville, shall depend the fortune of this wretch to whom you have been so gross a dupe as to justify the imputation of folly. Why, even without knowing

me, she ridiculed your passion, and offered to leave you.

Wood. Impossible !

Ld Glen. Dare you disbelieve me, sir ?—nay, she shall be produced, and obliged to confess her arts ;—then blush and obey ! Here, Vane ! Governor ! the keys !

(*Exit.*

(*WOODVILLE walks behind in great agitation.*

Har. Now could I find in my heart to make this story into a ballad, as a warning to all meddling puppies ; and then hang myself, that it may conclude with a grace. Zounds, he must be endued with supernatural intelligence ! Just when I was saying a thousand civil things to myself on my success, to have my mine sprung before my eyes by the enemy ; and instead of serving my friend and myself, become a mere tool to old Gravity's revenge ! 'Pshaw ! however, we must make the best of a bad matter.—Woodville, what dost mean to do, man ?

Wood. Let them produce my Cecilia !—I will then seize and protect her to the last moment of my life.

Har. And I will assist you to the last moment of mine.

Wood. My generous cousin ! this is indeed friendship.

Har. Not so very generous, if you knew all.

Re-enter LORD GLENMORE and the Governor with BRIDGET, holding a handkerchief to her eyes, VANE following ; WOODVILLE flies and clasps her in his arms ; HARCOURT takes her hand.

Wood. My love ! my life !—do I once again behold thee ?—fear nothing !—you here are safe from all the world !—will you not bless me with one look ?

Brid. (*Looking at him and HARCOURT with ridiculous distress.*) Oh, dear me !

Ld Glen. I have put it out of your power to marry, sir, otherwise you may take her.

Wood. Take her!—What poor farce is this?

Har. Hey-day! more incomprehensibilities?

Vane. (*Aside.*) Now for the eclairsissement—since, if the Governor doesn't acknowledge her in his first rage and confusion, I may never be able to make him!—I humbly hope Mr Woodville will pardon me, if, with her own consent and my lord's, I this morning married this young lady.

Gov. Zounds, you dog, what's that?—you married her?—Why, how did you dare?—And you too, my lord!—what the devil, did you consent to this?

Vane. Believe me, sir, I didn't then know she was your daughter.

Ld Glen. Daughter!

Gov. So, it's out, after all:—It's a lie, you dog! you did know she was my daughter;—you all knew it;—you all conspired to torment me!

All. Ha, ha, ha!

Gov. Ha, ha, ha! confound your mirth!—as if I had not plagues enough already.—And you have great reason to grin too, my lord, when you have thrown my gawky on your impudent valet.

Ld Glen. Who could ever have dreamt of—ha, ha, ha!—of finding this your little wonder of the country, brother?

Har. Nay, my lord, she's the little wonder of the town too.

All. Ha, ha, ha!

Gov. Mighty well,—mighty well,—mighty well; pray, take your whole laugh out, good folks; since this is, positively, the last time of my entertaining you in this manner.—A cottage shall henceforth be her portion, and a rope mine.

Brid. If you are my papa, I think you might give some better proof of your kindness;—but I sha'n't stir;—why, I married on purpose that I might not care for you.

Gov. Why, thou eternal torment! my original sin!

—whose first fault was the greatest frailty of woman ; and whose second, her greatest folly ! dost thou, or the designing knave who has entrapped thee merely for that purpose, imagine my wealth shall ever reward incontinence and ingratitude ?—no ; go knit stockings to some regiment, where he is preferred to be drummer !—warm yourself when the sun shines !—soak every hard-earn'd crust in your own tears, and repent at leisure. *(Exit in a rage.*

All. Ha, ha, ha !

Ld Glen. He to ridicule my mode of education !—But what is the meaning of all this ?

Wood. Truly, my lord, I believe it would be very hard to find any for either my uncle's words or actions.—I am equally at a loss to guess as to Bridget here.

Vane. Hey, what ? Bridget, did you say, sir ? Why, you little ugly witch, are you really Bridget ?

Brid. Why, I told you so all along ; but you wou'dn't believe me.

All. Ha, ha, ha !

Brid. Oh dear heart !—I am now as much afeard of my new husband as father !

Ld Glen. For thee, wench—

Brid. *(Pops upon her knees.)* Oh, no more locking up, for goodness sake, my lord !—I be sick enough of passing for a lady : but, if old Scratch ever puts such a trick again in my head, I hope—your lordship will catch me ! that's all. *(Exit.*

Vane. I shall run distracted ! have I married an—and all for nothing, too ?

Ld Glen. A punishment peculiarly just, as it results from abusing my confidence—Hence, wretch ! nor ever, while you live, appear again in my presence.

(Exit VANE, looking furiously after BRIDGET.

Ld Glen. 'Tis time to return to ourselves. We shall soon come to an eclaireissement, Woodville !—Since you won't marry, I will.

Wood. My lord !

Ld Glen. And you shall judge of my choice. (*Exit.*

Har. Now for it;—whatever devil diverts himself among us to-day, I see he owes my sagacious lord here a grudge, as well as the rest; and I foresee that his wife and the Governor's daughter will prove equally entertaining.

Enter LORD GLENMORE leading CECILIA, followed by MISS MORTIMER.

Ld Glen. This lady, sir, I have selected;—a worthy choice.

Wood. I dream, surely!—that lady your choice!—your's!

Ld Glen. Ungrateful son! had such been your's—

Wood. Why, this very angel is mine, my Cecilia, my first, my only love.

Ld Glen. How!—

Cec. Yes, my lord!—you now know the unhappy object at once of your resentment, contempt, and admiration!—my own misfortunes I had learnt to bear, but those of Woodville overpower me!—I deliver myself up to your justice; content to be every way his victim, so I am not his ruin.

Ld Glen. But to find you in this house—

Cec. Your generous nephew and the amiable Miss Mortimer distinguished me with the only asylum could shelter me from your son!

Ld Glen. They distinguished themselves!—Oh, Woodville! did I think an hour ago I could be more angry with you?—How durst thou warp a mind so noble?

Wood. It is a crime my life cannot expiate,—yet, if the sincerest anguish—

Ld Glen. I have one act of justice still in my power;—my prejudice in favour of birth, and even a stronger prejudice, is corrected by this lovely girl:—of her goodness of heart and greatness of mind I have had incontestible proofs; and if I thought you, Frank—

Cec. Yet, stay, my lord! nor kill me with too much kindness. Once your generosity might have made me happy, now only miserable. My reason, my pride, nay even my love, induces me to refuse, as the only way to prove I deserve him!—he has taught me to know the world too late, nor will I retort on him the contempt I have incurred. Mr Woodville will tell you whether I have not solemnly vowed—

Wood. Not to accept me without the consent of both fathers; and if mine consents, what doubt—

Governor without.

Stop that old man! stop that mad parson! stop him!

GREY without.

Nothing shall stop me in pursuit of my—(*Enters.*) Ha! she is—she is here indeed! Providence has at length directed me to her. (*Runs to CECILIA.*

Cec. My father! covered with shame let me sink before you.

Ld Glen. and Har. Her father!

Enter Governor.

Grey. Rise, my glorious girl! rise purified and forgiven! rise to pity with me the weak minds that know not all thy value, and venerate the noble ones that do.

Gov. Hey! is it possible! Grey, is this my—

Grey. Yes, sir; this is your Cecilia, my Cecilia, the object of your avowed rejection and contempt!

Gov. Rejection and contempt! stand out of the way—let me embrace my daughter—let me take her once more to my heart— (*Runs and embraces her.*

Ld Glen. His daughter!

Gov. Yes, my friend, this is really my daughter—my own Cecilia; as sure as I am an old fool after being a young one, this good girl has a right to call

me by the name of father.—Hasn't she, Grey?—Why, my lord, this is the very parson I told you of.—(*Taking CECILIA'S arm under his.*) And now, young sir, what do you say to your uncle's freaks?

Wood. Say, sir? that, had you ten thousand such, I would go through a patriarchal servitude, in hopes of Cecilia's hand for my reward.

Gov. And, had I ten millions of money, and this only girl, thou should'st have her, and that, too, for thy noble freedom!—And what says my Cecilia to her father's first gift?

Cec. Astonishment and pleasure leave me hardly power to say, that a disobedience to you, sir, would only double my fault; nor to worship that heaven, which has led me through such a trial to such a reward!—Take all I have left myself to give you, Woodville, in my hand.

(*WOODVILLE kisses first her hand, and then herself.*)

Grey. Now, let me die, my darling child! since I have seen thee, once more, innocent and happy.

Gov. And now, kiss me, my Cecilia!—Kiss me!—Od! Miss Mortimer shall kiss me too, for loving my poor girl here!—Kiss me all of you, old and young! men, women, and children!—Od, I am so overjoyed, I dread the consequences.—D'ye hear there?—Fetch me a surgeon and a bottle of wine!—I must both empty and fill my veins on this occasion!—Zooks, I could find in my heart to frisk it merrily in defiance of the gout, and take that cursed vixen below, whoever she is, for my partner!

Ld Glen. Methinks all seem rewarded, but my poor Sophia here! and her protection of Cecilia deserves the highest recompence!—But whenever, my dear, you can present me the husband of your choice, I will present him with a fortune fit for my daughter.

Gov. Protect Cecilia!—Od! she is a good girl, and a charming girl, and I honour the very tip of her feathers now!—If she could but fancy our Charles,

I'd throw in something pretty on his side, I promise you.

Miss Mor. Frankness is the fashion. What would you say, sir, and you, my lord, if I had fancied your Charles so much as to make him mine already?

Gov. Hey-day! more discoveries!—How's this, boy?

Har. Even so, sir, indeed.

Ld Glen. It completes my satisfaction.

Gov. Od, brother! Who'd have thought you in the right all the while?—We'll never separate again, by the Lord Harry! but knock down our Welch friend's old house, and raise him one on the ruins, large enough to contain the whole family of us, where he shall reign sole sovereign over all our future little Woodvilles and Cecilians.

Cec. Oppressed with wonder, pleasure, gratitude, I must endeavour to forgive myself, when heaven thus graciously proves its forgiveness, in allying me to every human being my heart distinguishes.

Grey. Yes, my Cecilia, you may believe him, who never gave you a bad lesson, that you are now most truly entitled to esteem; since it requires a far greater exertion to stop your course down the hill of vice, than to toil slowly up toward virtue.

[*Exeunt.*]

THE
ENGLISH MERCHANT,
A
COMEDY,
IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRE-ROYAL, DURY-LANE.

BY
GEORGE COLMAN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LORD FALBRIDGE,
SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS,
FREEPORT,
SPATTER,
OWEN,
LA FRANCE,
Officer,
Servants, &c.

Mr Powell.
Mr Havard.
Mr Yates.
Mr King.
Mr Burton.
Mr Baddeley.
Mr Strange.

LADY ALTON,
AMELIA,
MRS GOODMAN,
MOLLY,

Mrs Abington.
Mrs Palmer.
Mrs Hopkins.
Miss Pope.

SCENE—London.

THE
ENGLISH MERCHANT.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A Room in MRS GOODMAN'S House.

Enter MOLLY, struggling with SPATTER.

Mol. Be quiet, Mr Spatter ! let me alone, pray now, sir ! It is a strange thing a body can't go about the house without being pestered with your impertinence—Why sure—

Spat. Introduce me to your mistress then ; come, there's a good girl !—and I will tease you no longer.

Mol. Indeed I sha'n't—Introduce you to my lady ! for what, pray ?

Spat. Oh! for a thousand things. To laugh, to chat, to take a dish of tea, to—

Mol. You drink tea with my lady! I should not have thought of that—On what acquaintance?

Spat. The most agreeable in the world, child; a new acquaintance.

Mol. Indeed you mistake yourself mightily; you are not a proper acquaintance for a person of her quality, I assure you, sir!

Spat. Why, what quality is she, then?

Mol. Much too high quality for your acquaintance, I promise you. What, a poet man! that sits write, write, write, all day long, scribbling a pack of nonsense for the newspapers. You're fit for nothing above a chambermaid.

Spat. That's as much to say, that you think me just fit for you, eh, child?

Mol. No, indeed, not I, sir. Neither my lady nor I will have any thing to say to you.

Spat. Your mistress and you both give yourselves a great many airs, my dear. Your poverty, I think, might pull down your pride.

Mol. What does the fellow mean by poverty?

Spat. I mean that you are starving.

Mol. Oh the slanderous monster! We starving! Who told you so? I'd have you to know, sir, my lady has a very great fortune.

Spat. So 'tis a sign, by her way of life and appearance.

Mol. Well, she lives privately indeed, because she loves retirement; she goes plain, because she hates dress; she keeps no table, because she is an enemy to luxury: In short, my lady is as rich as a Jew, and you are an impertinent coxcomb.

Spat. Come, come! I know more of your mistress than you imagine.

Mol. And what do you know of her?

Spat. Oh, I know what I know.

Mol. Well!

(*Alarmed.*

Spat. I know who she is, and where she came from; I am very well acquainted with her family, and know her whole history.

Mol. How can that be?

Spat. Very easily—I have correspondence every where. As private as she may think herself, it is not the first time that I have seen or heard of Amelia.

Mol. Oh gracious! as sure as I am alive this man will discover us! (*Apart.*) Mr Spatter, my dear Mr Spatter, if you know any thing, sure you would not be so cruel as to betray us!

Spat. My dear Mr Spatter! O ho! I have guessed right—there is something then.

Mol. No, sir, there is nothing at all; nothing that signifies to you or any body else.

Spat. Well, well, I'll say nothing; but then you must—

Mol. What?

Spat. Come, kiss me, hussy!

Mol. I say kiss you, indeed!

Spat. And you'll introduce me to your mistress.

Mol. Not I, I promise you.

Spat. Nay, no mysteries between you and me, child! Come, here's the key to all locks, the clue to every maze, and the discloser of all secrets; money, child! Here, take this purse; you see I know something; tell me the rest, and I have the fellow to it in my pocket.

Mol. Ha, ha, ha! poor Mr Spatter! Where could you get all this money, I wonder? Not by your poctries, I believe. But what signifies telling you any thing, when you are acquainted with our whole history already. You have correspondence every where, you know. There, sir! take up your filthy purse again, and remember that I scorn to be obliged to any body but my mistress.

Spat. There's impudence for you ! when, to my certain knowledge, your mistress has not a guinea in the world ; you live in continual fear of being discovered ; and you will both be utterly undone in a fortnight, unless Lord Falbridge should prevent it, by taking Amelia under his protection. You understand me, child ?

Mol. You scandalous wretch ! Did you ever hear such a monster ? I won't stay a moment longer with him ; but you are quite mistaken about me and my mistress, I assure you, sir. We are in the best circumstances in the world ; we have nothing to fear ; and we don't care a farthing for you. So your servant, Mr Poet. *(Exit.*

SPATTER alone.

Your servant, Mrs Pert ! “ We are in the best circumstances in the world.” Ay, that is as much as to say, they are in the utmost distress. “ We have nothing to fear ;” that is, they are frightened out of their wits.—“ And we don't care a farthing for you,” meaning that they will take all the care in their power that I shall not find them out. But I may be too hard for you yet, young gentlewoman ! I have earned but a poor livelihood by mere scandal and abuse ; but if I could once arrive at doing a little substantial mischief, I should make my fortune.

Enter MRS GOODMAN.

Oh ! your servant, Mrs Goodman ! Your's is the most unsocial lodging-house in town. So many ladies, and only one gentleman ! and you won't take the least notice of him.

Mrs Good. How so, Mr Spatter ?

Spat. Why, did not you promise to introduce me to Amelia ?

Mrs Good. To tell you the plain truth, Mr Spatter, she don't like you. And, indeed, I don't know how it is, but you make yourself a great many enemies.

Spat. Yes ; I believe I do raise a little envy.

Mrs Good. Indeed you are mistaken, sir. As you are a lodger of mine, it makes me quite uneasy to hear what the world says of you. How do you contrive to make so many enemies, Mr Spatter ?

Spat. Because I have merit, Mrs Goodman.

Mrs Good. May be so ; but nobody will allow it but yourself. They say that you set up for a wit, indeed ; but that you deal in nothing but scandal, and think of nothing but mischief.

Spat. I do speak ill of the men sometimes, to be sure ; but then I have a great regard for women—provided they are handsome : and that I may give you a proof of it, introduce me to Amelia.

Mrs Good. You must excuse me ; she and you would be the worst company in the world : for she never speaks too well of herself, nor the least ill of any body else. And then her virtue—

Spat. Pooh, pooh, she speaks ill of nobody, because she knows nobody ; and as for her virtue, ha, ha, ha!

Mrs Good. You don't believe much in that, I suppose ?

Spat. I have not over much faith, Mrs Goodman. Lord Falbridge, perhaps, may give a better account of it.

Mrs Good. Lord Falbridge can say nothing but what would be extremely to her honour, I assure you, sir. (*SPATTER laughs.*) Well, well, you may laugh, but it is very true.

Spat. Oh, I don't doubt it ; but you don't tell the whole truth, Mrs Goodman. When any of your friends or acquaintance sit for their pictures, you draw a very flattering likeness. All characters have their dark side, and if they have but one eye, you give them in profile. Your great friend, Mr Freeport, for instance, whom you are always praising for his benevolent actions—

Mrs Good. He is benevolence itself, sir.

Spat. Yes, and grossness itself too. I remember him these many years. He always cancels an obligation by the manner of conferring it; and does you a favour, as if he were going to knock you down.

Mrs Good. A truce with your satire, good Mr Spatter! Mr Freeport is my best friend; I owe him every thing; and I can't endure the slightest reflection on his character. Besides, he can have given no offence to Lady Alton, whatever may be the case with Amelia.

Spat. Lady Alton! she is a particular friend of mine, to be sure; but, between you and me, Mrs Goodman, a more ridiculous character than any you have mentioned. *A belle esprit* forsooth! and as vain of her beauty as learning, without any great portion of either. A fourth grace, and a tenth muse! who fancies herself enamoured of Lord Falbridge, because she would be proud of such a conquest; and has lately bestowed some marks of distinction on me, because she thinks it will give her credit among persons of letters.

Mrs Good. Nay, if you can't spare your own friends, I don't wonder at your attacking mine—and so, sir, your humble servant.—But stay, here's a post-chaise stopped at our door; and here comes a servant with a portmanteau; 'tis the gentleman for whom my first floor was taken, I suppose.

Spat. Very likely: well, you will introduce me to him at least, Mrs Goodman.

*Enter a Servant with a portmanteau—*SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS *following.*

Sir Wil. You are Mrs Goodman, I suppose, madam?

Mrs Good. At your service, sir.

Sir Wil. Mr Owen, I believe, has secured apartments here?

Mrs Good. He has, sir.

Sir Wil. They are for me, madam—Have you any other lodgers?

Mrs Good. Only that gentleman, sir, and a young lady—

Spat. Of great beauty and virtue, eh, Mrs Goodman?

Mrs Good. She has both, sir; but you will see very little of her, for she lives in the most retired manner in the world.

Sir Wil. Her youth and beauty are matter of great indifference to me, for I shall be as much a recluse as herself.—Are there any news at present stirring in London?

Mrs Good. Mr Spatter can inform you, sir, for he deals in news. In the mean while, I'll prepare your apartments. *(Exit, followed by the servant.)*

Manent SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS and SPATTER; SIR WILLIAM walks up and down without taking notice of SPATTER.

Spat. This must be a man of quality by his ill manners. I'll speak to him. *(Aside.) (To SIR WILLIAM.)* Will your lordship give me leave—

Sir Wil. Lordship! I am no lord, sir, and must beg not to be honoured with the name.

Spat. It is a kind of mistake, that cannot displease at least.

Sir Wil. I don't know that. None but a fool would be vain of a title, if he had one; and none but an impostor would assume a title to which he has no right.

Spat. Oh, you're of the house of commons then, a member of parliament, and are come up to town to attend the sessions, I suppose, sir?

Sir Wil. No matter what I am, sir.

Spat. Nay, no offence I hope, sir. All I meant was to do you honour. Being concerned in two Evening-Posts, and one morning paper, I was willing

to know the proper manner of announcing your arrival.

Sir Wil. You have connections with the press then, it seems, sir?

Spat. Yes, sir; I am an humble retainer to the muses, an author. I compose pamphlets on all subjects, compile magazines, and do newspapers.

Sir Wil. Do newspapers! What do you mean by that, sir?

Spat. That is, sir, I collect the articles of news from the other papers, and make new ones for the postscript, translate the mails, write occasional letters from Cato and Theatricus, and give fictitious answers to supposed correspondents.

Sir Wil. A very ingenious as well as honourable employment, I must confess, sir!

Spat. Some little genius is requisite, to be surc. Now, sir, if I can be of any use to you—if you have any friend to be praised, or any enemy to be abused, any author to cry up, or minister to run down, my pen and talents are entirely at your service.

Sir Wil. I am much obliged to you, sir, but at present I have not the least occasion for either. In return for your genteel offers, give me leave to trouble you with one piece of advice. When you deal in private scandal, have a care of the cudgel; and when you meddle with public matters, beware of the pillory.

Spat. How, sir! are you no friend to literature? Are you an enemy to the liberty of the press?

Sir Wil. I have the greatest respect for both; but railing is the disgrace of letters, and personal abuse the scandal of freedom: foul-mouthed critics are in general disappointed authors; and they who are the loudest against ministers only mean to be paid for their silence.

Spat. That may be sometimes, sir; but give me leave to ask you——

Sir Wil. Do not ask me at present, sir! I see a particular friend of mine coming this way, and I must beg you to withdraw.

Spat. Withdraw, sir! first of all allow me to——

Sir Wil. Nay, no reply: we must be in private.
[*Thrusting out SPATTER.*]

SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS *alone.*

What a wretch! as contemptible as mischievous. Our generous mastiffs fly at men from an instinct of courage; but this fellow's attacks proceed from an instinct of baseness—But here comes the faithful Owen, with as many good qualities as that execrable fellow seems to have bad ones.

Enter OWEN.

Well, Owen, I am safe arrived you see.

Owen. Ah, sir! would to heaven you were as safe returned again! Have a care of betraying yourself to be Sir William Douglas!—During your stay here, your name is Ford, remember.

Sir Wil. I shall take care—But tell me your news—What have you done since your arrival? Have you heard any thing of my daughter? Have you seen Lord Brumpton? Has he any hope of obtaining my pardon?

Owen. He had, sir.

Sir Wil. And what can have destroyed it then?

Owen. My Lord Brumpton is dead, sir.

Sir Wil. Dead!

Owen. I saw him within this week in apparent good health; he promised to exert his whole interest in your favour: by his own appointment I went to wait on him yesterday noon, when I was stunned with the news of his having died suddenly the evening before.

Sir Wil. My Lord Brumpton dead! the only friend I had remaining in England; the only person, on whose intercession I relied for my pardon! Cruel

fortune ! I have now no hope but to find my daughter. Tell me, Owen ; have you been able to hear any tidings of her ?

Owen. Alas, sir ! none that are satisfactory. On the death of Mr Andrews, in whose care you left her, being cruelly abandoned by the relation who succeeded to the estate, she left the country some months ago, and has not since been heard of.

Sir Wil. Unhappy there too ! When will the measure of my misfortunes be full ? When will the malice of my fate be satisfied ? Proscribed, condemned, attainted, (alas, but too justly !) I have lost my rank, my estate, my wife, my son, and all my family. One only daughter remains. Perhaps a wretched wanderer like myself, perhaps in the extremest indigence, perhaps dishonoured—Ha ! that thought distracts me.

Owen. My dear master, have patience ! Do not be ingenious to torment yourself, but consult your safety, and prepare for your departure.

Sir Wil. No, Owen. Hearing, providentially, of the death of my friend Andrews, paternal care and tenderness drew me hither ; and I will not quit the kingdom till I learn something of my child, my dear Amelia, whom I left a tender innocent in the arms of the best of women twenty years ago. Her sex demands protection ; and she is now of an age, in which she is more exposed to misfortunes than even in helpless infancy.

Owen. Be advised ; depart, and leave that care to me. Consider your life is now at stake.

Sir Wil. My life has been too miserable to render me very solicitous for its preservation—But the complexion of the times is changed ; the very name of the party, in which I was unhappily engaged, is extinguished, and the whole nation is unanimously devoted to the throne. Disloyalty and insurrection are now no more, and the sword of justice is suffered to sleep. If I can find my child, and find her worthy

of me, I will fly with her to take refuge in some foreign country; if I am discovered in the search, I have still some hopes of mercy.

Owen. Heaven grant your hopes may be well founded!

Sir Wil. Come, Owen! let us behave at least with fortitude in our adversity! Follow me to my apartment, and let us consult what measures we shall take in searching for Amelia. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

AMELIA'S Apartment.

Enter AMELIA and MOLLY.

Amel. Poor Molly! to be teased with that odious fellow, Spatter!

Mol. But, madam, Mr Spatter says he is acquainted with your whole history.

Amel. Mere pretence, in order to render himself formidable. Be on your guard against him, my dear Molly; and remember to conceal my misery from him and all the world. I can bear poverty, but am not proof against insult and contempt.

Mol. Ah, my dear mistress, it is to no purpose to endeavour to hide it from the world. They will see poverty in my looks. As for you, you can live upon the air; the greatness of your soul seems to support you; but, lack-a-day! I shall grow thinner and thinner every day of my life.

Amel. I can support my own distress, but yours touches me to the soul. Poor Polly! the labour of my hands shall feed and clothe you—Here, dispose

of this embroidery to the best advantage ; what was formerly my amusement must now become the means of our subsistence. Let us be obliged to nobody, but owe our support to industry and virtue.

Mol. You're an angel : let me kiss those dear hands that have worked this precious embroidery ; let me bathe them with my tears ! You're an angel upon earth. I had rather starve in your service, than live with a princess. What can I do to comfort you ?

Amel. Thou faithful creature—only continue to be secret : you know my real character ; you know I am in the utmost distress : I have opened my heart to you, but you will plant a dagger there if you betray me to the world.

Mol. Ah, my dear mistress, how should I betray you ! I go no where, I converse with nobody but yourself and Mrs Goodman : besides, the world is very indifferent about other people's misfortunes.

Amel. The world is indifferent, it is true ; but it is curious, and takes a cruel pleasure in tearing open the wounds of the unfortunate.

Enter MRS GOODMAN.

Mrs Goodman !

Mrs Good. Excuse me, madam : I took the liberty of waiting on you to receive your commands. 'Tis now near three o'clock. You have provided nothing for dinner, and have scarce taken any refreshment these three days.

Amel. I have been indisposed.

Mrs Good. I am afraid you are more than indisposed—You are unhappy—Pardon me ! but I cannot help thinking that your fortune is unequal to your appearance.

Amel. Why should you think so ? You never heard me complain of my fortune.

Mrs Good. No, but I have too much reason to believe it is inferior to your merit.

Amel. Indeed you flatter me.

Mrs Good. Come, come; you must not indulge this melancholy. I have a new lodger, an elderly gentleman, just arrived, who does me the honour to partake of my dinner; and I must have your company too. He seems to be in trouble as well as you. You must meet; two persons in affliction may perhaps become a consolation to each other. Come, let us take some care of you.

Amel. Be assured, Mrs Goodman, I am much obliged to you for your attention to me; but I want nothing.

Mrs Good. Dear madam! you say you want nothing, and you are in want of every thing.

Enter Servant.

Serv. (To *Mrs Good.*) Lady Alton, madam, sends her compliments, and will wait upon you after dinner.

Mrs Good. Very well; my best respects to her ladyship, and I shall be ready to attend her. (*Exit Servant.*) There, there is one cause of your uneasiness! Lady Alton's visit is on your account. She thinks you have robbed her of Lord Falbridge's affections, and that is the occasion of her honouring me with her company.

Amel. Lord Falbridge's affections!

Mrs Good. Ah! my dear Amelia, you don't know your power over his heart. You have reconciled it to virtue—but come! let me prevail on you to come with me to dinner.

Amel. You must excuse me.

Mrs Good. Well, well, then I'll send you something to your own apartment. If you have any other commands, pray honour me with them, for I would fain oblige you if I knew how it were in my power.

(*Exit.*)

Manent AMELIA and MOLLY.

Amel. What an amiable woman ! If it had not been for her apparent benevolence and goodness of heart, I should have left the house on Mr Spatter's coming to lodge in it.

Mol. Lady Alton, it seems, recommended him as a lodger here ; so he can be no friend of yours on that account ; for to be sure she owes you no good will on account of my Lord Falbridge.

Amel. No more of Lord Falbridge, I beseech you, Molly. How can you persist in mentioning him, when you know that, presuming on my situation, he has dared to affront me with dishonourable proposals ?

Mol. Ah, madam, but he sorely repents it, I promise you, and would give his whole estate for an opportunity of seeing you once more, and getting into your good graces again.

Amel. No ; his ungenerous conduct has thrown him as much below me, as my condition had placed me beneath him. He imagined he had a right to insult my distress ; but I will teach him to think it respectable.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

An Apartment at Mrs GOODMAN'S.

Enter LADY ALTON and SPATTER.

Spat. But you won't hear me, madam!

Lady Al. I have heard too much, sir! This wandering *incognita* a woman of virtue! I have no patience!

Spat. Mrs Goodman pretends to be convinced of her being a person of honour.

Lady Al. A person of honour, and openly receive visits from men! seduce Lord Falbridge! No, no: reserve this character for your next novel, Mr Spatter—it is an affront to my understanding. I begin to suspect you have betrayed me; you have gone over to the adverse party, and are in the conspiracy to abuse me.

Spat. I, madam! Neither her beauty nor her virtue—

Lady Al. Her beauty! her virtue! Why, thou wretch, thou grub of literature, whom I as a patroness of learning and encourager of men of letters, willing to blow the dead coal of genius, fondly took

under my protection, do you remember what I have done for you?

Spat. With the utmost gratitude, madam.

Lady Al. Did not I draw you out of the garret, where you daily spun out your flimsy brain to catch the town flies in your cobweb dissertations? Did not I introduce you to Lord Dapperwit, the Apollo of the age? And did not you dedicate your silly volume of Poems on Several Occasions to him? Did not I put you into the list of my visitors, and order my porter to admit you at dinner-time? Did not I write the only scene in your execrable farce, which the audience vouchsafed an hearing? And did not my female friend, Mrs Melpomene, furnish you with Greek and Latin mottoes for your two-penny essays?

Spat. I acknowledge all your ladyship's goodness to me. I have done every thing in my power to shew my gratitude and fulfil your ladyship's commands.

Lady Al. Words, words, Mr Spatter! You have been witness of Lord Falbridge's inconstancy. A perfidious man! False as Phaon to Sappho, or Jason to Medea! You have seen him desert me for a wretched vagabond; you have seen me abandoned like Calypso, without making a single effort to recall my faithless Ulysses from the Siren that has lured him from me.

Spat. Be calm but one moment, madam, and I'll——

Lady Al. Bid the sea be calm, when the winds are let loose upon it. I have reason to be enraged. I placed you in genteel apartments in this house, merely to plant you as a spy; and what have you done for me? Have you employed your correspondence to any purpose? or discovered the real character of this infamous woman, this insolent Amelia?

Spat. I have taken every possible method to detect her. I have watched Amelia herself like a bailiff, or a duenna; I have overheard private conversations,

have sounded the landlady, tampered with the servants, opened letters, and intercepted messages.

Lady Al. Good creature! my best Spatter! And what, what have you discovered?

Spat. That Amelia is a native of Scotland; that her surname Walton is probably not real, but assumed; and that she earnestly wishes to conceal both the place of her birth and her family.

Lady Al. And is that all?

Spat. All that I have been able to learn as yet, madam.

Lady Al. Wretch! of what service have you been then? Are these your boasted talents? When we want to unravel an ambiguous character, you have made out that she wishes to lie concealed; and when we wish to know who she is, you have just discovered that she is a native of Scotland!

Spat. And yet, if you will give me leave, madam, I think I could convince you that these discoveries, blind and unsatisfactory as they may appear to you at first, are of no small consequence.

Lady Al. Of what consequence can they possibly be to me, man?

Spat. I'll tell you, madam. It is a rule in politics, when we discover something, to add something more. Something added to something makes a good deal; upon this basis I have formed a syllogism.

Lady Al. What does the pedant mean? A syllogism!

Spat. Yes, a syllogism: as for example; any person who is a native of Scotland, and wishes to be concealed, must be an enemy to the government. Amelia is a native of Scotland, and wishes to be concealed; ergo, Amelia is an enemy to the government.

Lady Al. Excellent! admirable logic! but I wish we could prove it to be truth.

Spat. I would not lay a wager of the truth of it, but I would swear it.

Lady Al. What, on a proper occasion, and in a proper place, my good Spatter?

Spat. Willingly; we must make use of what we know, and even of what we don't know. Truth is of a dry and simple nature, and stands in need of some little ornament. A lie, indeed, is infamous; but fiction, your ladyship, who deals in poetry, knows is beautiful.

Lady Al. But the substance of your fiction, Spatter?

Spat. I will lodge an information that the father of Amelia is a disaffected person, and has sent her to London for treasonable purposes: nay, I can upon occasion even suppose the father himself to be in London: in consequence of which you will probably recover Lord Falbridge, and Amelia will be committed to prison.

Lady Al. You have given me new life. I took you for a mere stainer of paper; but I have found you a Machiavel.—I hear somebody coming.—Mrs Goodman has undertaken to send Amelia hither. Ha! she's here—Away, Spatter, and wait for me at my house: you must dine with me; and after dinner, like true politicians, we will settle our plan of operations over our coffee. Away, away, this instant!

[Exit SPATTER.

LADY ALTON *alone.*

A convenient engine this Mr Spatter: the most impudent, thorough-paced knave in the three kingdoms! with the heart of Zoilus, the pen of Mævius, and the tongue of Thersites. I was sure he would stick at nothing. The writings of authors are public advertisements of their qualifications; and when they profess to live upon scandal, it is as much as to say, that they are ready for every other dirty work in which we chuse to employ them.—But now for Amelia; if she proves tractable, I may forego the use of

this villain, who almost makes me hate my triumph, and be ashamed of my revenge.

Enter AMELIA.

Amel. Mrs Goodman has informed me that your ladyship has desired to see me: I wait your commands, madam.

Lady Al. Look you, young woman, I am sensible how much it is beneath a person of my rank to parley with one of your condition; for once, however, I am content to wave all ceremony; and, if you behave as you ought to do, you have nothing to fear, child.

Amel. I hope I have never behaved otherwise than as I ought to do, madam.

Lady Al. Yes; you have received the visits of Lord Falbridge; you have endeavoured to estrange his affections from me: but, if you encourage him in his infidelity to me, tremble for the consequence: be advised or you are ruined.

Amel. I am conscious of no guilt, and know no fear, madam.

Lady Al. Come, come, Mrs Amelia; this high strain is out of character with me. Act over your Clelia, and Cleopatra, and Cassandra, at a proper time; and let me talk in the style of nature and common sense to you. You have no Lord Falbridge, no weak young nobleman to impose upon at present.

Amel. To impose upon! I scorn the imputation, and am sorry to find that your ladyship came hither merely to indulge yourself in the cruel pleasure of insulting one of the unhappiest of her sex. (*Weeping.*)

Lady Al. You are mistaken: I came hither to concert measures for your happiness, to assist your poverty, and relieve your distress. Leave this house; leave London; I will provide you a retirement in the country, and supply all your wants; only renounce

all thoughts of Lord Falbridge, and never let him know the place of your retreat.

Amel. Lord Falbridge! What is Lord Falbridge to me, madam?

Lady Al. To convince me you have no commerce with him, accept of my proposals.

Amel. No, madam; the favours which you intend me I could not receive without blushing. I have no wants but what I can supply myself; no distresses which your ladyship can relieve; and I will seek no refuge but in my own virtue.

Lady Al. Your virtue! Ridiculous! If you are a woman of virtue, what is the meaning of all this mystery? Who are you? What are you? Who will vouch for your character?

Amel. It wants no vouchers; nor will I suffer myself to be arraigned like a criminal, till I know by what authority you take upon you to act as my judge.

Lady Al. Matchless confidence! Yes, yes, it is too plain; I see you are the very creature I took you for; a mere adventurer; some strolling princess, that are perhaps more frugal of your favours than the rest of your sisterhood, merely to enhance the price of them.

Amel. Hold, madam! This opprobrious language is more injurious to your own honour than to mine. I see the violence of your temper, and will leave you. But you may one day know that my birth is equal to your own; my heart is perhaps more generous; and whatever may be my situation, I scorn to be dependent on any body; much less on one who has so mean an opinion of me, and who considers me as her rival.

(*Exit.*)

LADY ALTON *alone.*

Her rival! Unparalleled insolence! An open avowal of her compétition with me! Yes; I see Spatter must be employed. Her rival! I shall burst with indignation!

Enter MRS GOODMAN.

Lady Al. Mrs Goodman! where is Mr Spatter?

Mrs Good. He went out the moment he left your ladyship. But you seem disordered: shall I get you some hartshorn, madam?

Lady Al. Some poison!—Rival!—I shall choak with rage.—You shall hear from me. You, and your Amelia. You have abused me; you have conspired against my peace; and be assured you shall suffer for it. *(Exit.*

MRS GOODMAN alone.

What a violent woman! Her passion makes her forget what is due to her sex and quality. Ha! Mr Freeport!

Enter FREEPORT.

My best friend! Welcome to London! When did you arrive from Lisbon?

Free. But last night.

Mrs Good. I hope you have had a pleasant voyage?

Free. A good trading voyage—I have got money, but I have got the spleen too.—Have you any news in town?

Mrs Good. None at all, sir.

Free. So much the better: the less news, the less nonsense.—But what strange lady have you had here? I met her as I was coming up: she rushed by like a fury, and almost swept me down stairs again with the wind of her hoop-petticoat.

Mrs Good. Ah! jealousy! jealousy is a terrible passion, especially in a woman's breast, Mr Freeport.

Free. Jealousy! Why, she is not jealous of you, Mrs Goodman?

Mrs Good. No, but of a lodger of mine.

Free. Have you any new lodgers since I left you?

Mrs Good. Two or three, sir; the last arrived but

to-day; an elderly gentleman, who will see no company.

Free. He's in the right. Three parts in four of mankind are knaves or fools; and the fourth part live by themselves.—But who are your other lodgers?

Mrs Good. An author and a lady.

Free. I hate authors. Who is the lady?

Mrs Good. She calls herself Amelia Walton; but I believe that name is not her real one.

Free. Not her real one! Why, sure she is a woman of character?

Mrs Good. A woman of character! She is an angel. She is most miserably poor; and yet haughty to an excess.

Free. Pride and poverty! A sad composition, Mrs Goodman.

Mrs Good. No, sir; her pride is one of her greatest virtues: it consists in depriving herself of almost all necessaries, and concealing it from the world. Though every action speaks her to be a woman of birth and education, she lives upon the work of her own hands without murmur or complaint. I make use of a thousand stratagems to assist her against her will; I prevail on her to keep the money due for rent for her support, and furnish her with every thing she wants at half its prime cost; but if she perceives or suspects these little artifices, she takes it almost as ill as if I had attempted to defraud her. In short, sir, her unshaken virtue and greatness of soul under misfortunes, make me consider her as a prodigy, and often draw tears of pity and admiration from me.

Free. Ah! women's tears lie very near their eyes. I never cried in my life, and yet I can feel too; I can admire, I can esteem, but what signifies whimpering? Hark ye, Mrs Goodman! this is a very extraordinary account you give of this young woman; you have raised my curiosity, and I'll go and see this

lodger of yours ; I am rather out of spirits, and it will serve to amuse me.

Mrs Good. Oh, sir, you can't see her ; she neither pays visits nor receives them, but lives in the most retired manner in the world.

Free. So much the better : I love retirement as well as she. Where are her apartments ?

Mrs Good. On this very floor, on the other side of the staircase.

Free. I'll go and see her immediately.

Mrs Good. Indeed you can't, sir. It is impossible.

Free. Impossible ! where is the impossibility of going into a room ? Come along !

Mrs Good. For heaven's sake, Mr Freeport—

Free. Pshaw ! I have no time to lose, I have business half an hour hence.

Mrs Good. But won't it be rather indelicate, sir ? Let me prepare her first !

Free. Prepare her—With all my heart—But remember that I am a man of business, Mrs Goodman, and have no time to waste in ceremony and compliment. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

AMELIA'S Apartment.

AMELIA at work, and MOLLY.

Amel. No, Polly ! If Lord Falbridge comes again, I am resolved not to see him.

Mol. Indeed, madam, he loves you above all the world ; I am sure of it, and I verily believe he will

run mad, if you don't hear what he has to say for himself.

Amel. Speak no more of him.

Enter MRS GOODMAN.

Mrs Goodman!

Mrs Good. Pardon me, madam! Here is a gentleman of my acquaintance begs you would give him leave to speak with you.

Amel. A gentleman! who is he?

Mrs Good. His name is Freeport, madam. He has a few particularities; but he is the best hearted man in the world. Pray let him come in, madam!

Amel. By no means; you know I receive visits from nobody.

Enter FREEPORT.

Bless me, he's here! This is very extraordinary indeed, Mrs Goodman.

Free. Don't disturb yourself, young woman; don't disturb yourself.

Mol. Mighty free and easy, methinks!

Amel. Excuse me, sir; I am not used to receive visits from persons entirely unknown.

Free. Unknown! There is not a man in all London better known than I am. I am a merchant, my name is Freeport, Freeport of Crutched-Friars; inquire upon 'Change.

Amel. Mrs Goodman, I never saw the gentleman before. I am surprised at his coming here.

Free. Pooh! Pr'ythee—Mrs Goodman knows me well enough. (*MRS GOODMAN talks apart with AMELIA.*) Ay! that's right, Mrs Goodman. Let her know who I am, and tell her to make herself easy.

Mrs Good. But the lady does not chuse we should trouble her, sir.

Free. Trouble her! I'll give her no trouble; I came to drink a dish of tea with you; let your maid

get it ready, and we will have it here instead of your parlour.—In the mean time I will talk with this lady; I have something to say to her.

Amel. If you had any business, sir—

Free. Business! I tell you I have very particular business, so sit down, and let's have the tea.

Mrs Good. You shou'd not have followed me so soon, sir.

Free. Pooh, pr'ythee! (*Exit MRS GOODMAN.*)

Mol. This is the oddest man I ever saw in my life.

Amel. Well, sir, as I see you are a particular acquaintance of Mrs Goodman—But pray what are your commands for me, sir? (*They sit.*)

Free. I tell you what, young woman, I am a plain man, and will tell you my mind in an instant. I am told that you are one of the best women in the world, very virtuous, and very poor; I like you for that: but they say you are excessively proud too; now I don't like you for that, madam.

Mol. Free and easy still, I see.

Amel. And pray, sir, who told you so?

Free. Mrs Goodman.

Amel. She has deceived you, sir; not in regard to my pride, perhaps, for there is a certain right pride which every body, especially women, ought to possess; and as to virtue; it is no more than my duty; but as to poverty, I disclaim it; they who want nothing, cannot be said to be poor.

Free. It is no such thing: you don't speak the truth, and that is worse than being proud. I know very well that you are as poor as Job, that you are in want of common necessities, and don't make a good meal above once in a fortnight.

Mol. My mistress fasts for her health, sir.

Free. Hold your tongue, hussy! what, are you proud too?

Mol. Lord, what a strange man!

Free. But however, madam, proud or not proud,

does not signify two-pence.—Hark ye, young woman! it is a rule with me (as it ought to be with every good Christian) to give a tenth part of my fortune in charity. In the account of my profits there stands at present the sum of two thousand pounds on the credit side of my books, so that I am two hundred pounds in arrear. This I look upon as a debt due from my fortune to your poverty; yes, your poverty, I say; so never deny it. There's a bank note for two hundred pounds; and now I am out of your debt.—Where the deuce is this tea, I wonder?

Mol. I never saw such a man in my life.

Amel. I don't know that I ever was so thoroughly confounded (*Apart.*)—Sir! (To FREEPORT.

Free. Well?

Amel. This noble action has surprised me still more than your conversation; but you must excuse my refusal of your kindness; for I must confess, that if I were to accept what you offer, I don't know when I should be able to restore it.

Free. Restore it! why, who wants you to restore it? I never dreamt of restitution.

Amel. I feel, I feel your goodness to the bottom of my soul; but you must excuse me. I have no occasion for your bounty; take your note, sir, and bestow it where it is wanted.

Mol. Lord, madam! you are ten times stranger than the gentleman.—I tell you what, sir: (To FREEPORT.) it does not signify talking; we are in the greatest distress in the world, and if it had not been for the kindness and good-nature of Mrs Goodman, we might have died by this time. My lady has concealed her distress from every body that was willing and able to relieve her; you have come to the knowledge of it in spite of her teeth; and I hope that you will oblige her, in spite of her teeth, to accept of your generous offer.

Amel. No more, my dear Polly; if you would not have me die with shame, say no more! Return the gentleman his note with my best thanks for his kindness; tell him, I durst not accept of it; for when a woman receives presents from a man, the world will always suspect that she pays for them at the expence of her virtue.

Free. What's that! what does she say, child?

Mol. Lord, sir, I hardly know what she says. She says, that when a gentleman makes a young lady presents, he is always supposed to have a design upon her virtue.

Free. Nonsense! why should she suspect me of an ungenerous design, because I do a generous action?

Mol. Do you hear, madam?

Amel. Yes, I hear, I admire; but I must persist in my refusal: if that scandalous fellow Spatter were to hear of this, he would stick at saying nothing.

Free. Eh! what's that?

Mol. She is afraid you should be taken for her lover, sir.

Free. I for your lover! not I. I never saw you before. I don't love you, so make no scruples upon that account; I like you well enough, but I don't love you at all, not at all, I tell you.—If you have a mind never to see my face any more, good bye t'ye! —You shall never see me any more. If you like I should come back again, I'll come back again; but I lose time, I have business—your servant. (*Going.*

Amel. Stay, sir! do not leave me without receiving the sincerest acknowledgments of my gratitude and esteem: but, above all, receive your note again, and do not put me any longer to the blush!

Free. The woman is a fool.

Enter MRS GOODMAN.

Amel. Come hither, I beseech you, Mrs Goodman.

Mrs Good. Your pleasure, madam?

Amel. Here! take this note which that gentleman has given me by mistake, return it to him, I charge you; assure him of my esteem and admiration, but let him know I need no assistance, and cannot accept it. *[Exit.*

Manent FREEPORT, &c.

Mrs Good. Ah! Mr Freeport! you have been at your old trade. You are always endeavouring to do good actions in secret, but the world always finds you out, you see.

Mol. Well, I don't believe there are two stranger people in England than my mistress and that gentleman, one so ready to part with money, and the other so unwilling to receive it;—but don't believe her, sir, for, between friends, she is in very great need of assistance, I assure you.

Mrs Good. Indeed I believe so.

Free. Oh, I have no doubt on't, so I'll tell you what, Mrs Goodman, keep the note, and supply her wants out of it without her knowledge; and, now I think of it, that way is better than t'other.

Mol. I never saw such a strange man in my life.

(Exit.)

Mrs Good. I shall obey your kind commands, sir. Poor soul! my heart bleeds for her, her virtue and misfortunes touch me to the soul.

Free. I have some little feeling for her too, but she is too proud. A fine face, fine figure, well behaved, well bred, and I dare say an excellent heart!—But she is too proud, tell her so, d'ye hear? tell her she is too proud. I shall be too late for my busi-

ness—I'll see her again soon—It is a pity she is so proud. [Exeunt.

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

A Hall.

SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS *alone.*

A young woman! a native of Scotland! her name Amelia! supposed to be in the greatest distress, and living in total retirement! If fortune should for once smile upon me, and have thrown me into the very same house! I don't know what to think of it, and yet so many uncommon circumstances together recall the memory of my misfortunes, and awaken all the father in my bosom. I must be satisfied.

Enter MOLLY crossing the stage.

Sir Wil. Madam! will you permit me to speak one word to you?

Mol. (*Coming forward.*) If you please—what is your pleasure, sir?

Sir Wil. I presume, madam, you are the charming young woman I heard of?

Mol. I have a few charms in the eyes of some folks, sir, sure enough.

Sir Wil. And you are a native of Scotland, they tell me?

Mol. I am, at your service, sir.

Sir Wil. Will you give me leave to ask the name of your family? Who is your father?

Mol. I really don't remember my father.

Sir Wil. Ha! not remember him, do you say?

(*Earnestly.*)

Mol. No, sir, but I have been told that he was—

Sir Wil. Who, madam?

Mol. One of the most eminent bakers in Aberdeen, sir.

Sir Wil. Oh, I conceive! You live, I suppose, with the young lady I meant to speak to. I mistook you for the lady herself.

Mol. You did me a great deal of honour, I assure you, sir.

Sir Wil. But you are acquainted with your mistress's family?

Mol. Family, sir!

Sir Wil. Ay, who are her parents?

Mol. She comes of very creditable parents, I promise you, sir.

Sir Wil. I don't doubt it; but who are they? I have particular reasons for inquiring.

Mol. Very likely so, but I must beg to be excused, sir.

Sir Wil. Of what age is your mistress? you will tell me that at least.

Mol. Oh, as to her age, she don't care who knows that, she is too young to deny her age yet a while. She is about one-and-twenty, sir.

Sir Wil. Precisely the age of my Amelia. (*Apart.*) One-and-twenty, you say? (*To MOLLY.*)

Mol. Yes, sir, and I am about two-and-twenty; there is no great difference between us.

Sir Wil. (*Apart.*) It must be so; her age, her country, her manner of living, all concur to prove

her mine, my dear child, whom I left to taste of misfortune from the cradle.

Mol. (Apart.) What is he muttering, I wonder; I wish this one-and-twenty has not turned the old gentleman's head.

Sir Wil. Let me beg the favour of you to conduct me to your mistress; I want to speak with her.

Mol. She will see no company, sir; she is indisposed, she is in great affliction, and receives no visits at all.

Sir Wil. Mine is not a visit of form or ceremony, or even impertinent curiosity; but on the most urgent business. Tell her I am her fellow countryman.

Mol. What! are you of Scotland too, sir?

Sir Wil. I am. Tell her I take part in her afflictions, and may, perhaps, bring her some consolation.

Mol. There is something mighty particular about this old gentleman! He has not brought another two hundred pounds, sure! (*Apart.*) Well, sir, since you are so very pressing, since you say you are our fellow-countryman, if you will walk this way, I'll speak to my mistress, and see what I can do for you.

Sir Wil. I am obliged to you. (*Exit MOLLY.*) And now, if I may trust the forebodings of an old fond heart, I am going to throw my arms about my daughter. (*Exit.*)

As SIR WILLIAM follows MOLLY out on one side, SPATTER appears on the other.

SPATTER alone.

There they go! what the deuce can that old fellow and Amelia's maid do together? The slut is certainly conducting him to her mistress! In less than half an hour I expect that Amelia will be apprehended. In the mean time I must be upon the watch; for, since I have laid the information, it is high time that I

should collect some materials to support it.—Who comes here? Lord Falbridge's valet de chambre: his errand is to Amelia, without doubt; something may be learnt there, perhaps.

Enter LA FRANCE.

Ha! Monsieur La France! your servant.

La Fr. Serviteur! ver glad to see you, Monsieur Spatter.

Spat. Well; what brings you here, eh, Monsieur La France?

La Fr. Von lettre, monsieur.

Spat. A letter to whom?

La Fr. From my lor to Mademoiselle Amelie.

Spat. Oh, you're mistaken, monsieur; that letter is for Lady Alton.

La Fr. Lady Alton! no, *ma foi!* it be for mademoiselle. I am no mistake. *Je ne me trompe pas là dessus.*

Spat. Why, have not you carried several letters from Lord Falbridge to Lady Alton?

La Fr. Oh, *que oui!* but dis be for de young laty dat lif here; for mademoiselle: mi lor lov her! *ma foi*, he lov her *à la folie*.

Spat. And he loved Lady Alton *a la folie*, did not he?

La Fr. Oh, *que non!* he lov her so *gentely! si tranquiliment*; *ma foi*, he lov her *a la Française*.—But now he lov mademoiselle, he no eat, no sleep, no speak, but mademoiselle; no tink but of mademoiselle; quite an oder ting, Monsieur Spatter, quite an oder ting!

Spat. Well, well; no matter for that; the letter is for Lady Alton, I promise you.

La Fr. Ah, *pardonnez moi!*

Spat. It is, I assure you; and to convince you of it, see here, monsieur! Lady Alton has sent you five guineas to pay the postage.

La Fr. Five guineas ! *ma foi*, I believe I was mistake, indeed.

Spat. Ay, ay ; I told you you were mistaken : and, after all, if it should not be for her ladyship, she will inclose it in another case, and send it to Amelia, and nobody will be the wiser.

La Fr. *Fort bien* ; ver well ; *la voilà*. (*Gives the letter.*) I have got five guinées ; I don't care.

Spat. Why should you ? Where's the harm, if one woman should receive a letter written to another ? There will be nothing lost by it ; for if Amelia don't receive this, she will receive others ; and letters of this sort are all alike, you know.

La Fr. Begar dat is ver true. Adieu, sir.—I have execute my commission : adieu. *Oh ! je fais bien mes commissions, moi !* [Exit.

SPATTER alone.

See the effects of secret-service-money ! Intelligence must be paid for ; and the bribing couriers is a fair stratagem, by all the laws of war. Shall I break open this letter ; or carry it to Lady Alton as it is ? No, I'll read it myself, that I may have the credit of communicating the contents. Let me see ! (*Opens the letter and reads.*) “Thou dearest, most respectable, and most virtuous of women !” So ! this is *a la folie*, indeed, as Monsieur La France calls it.—“If any consideration could add to my remorse for the injury I have offered you, it would be the discovery of your real character.” Ah, ah ! “I know who you are. I know you are the daughter of the unhappy Sir William Douglas.”—So, so !—“Judge then of the tumult of my soul, which is only preserved from the horrors of despair, by the hopes of rendering some service to the father, which may, perhaps, in some measure atone for my behaviour to his too justly offended daughter. Give me leave, this evening, to sue for my pardon at your feet, and to inform you of

the measures I have taken. In the mean time believe me unalterably yours. FALBRIDGE."

This is a precious packet, indeed.—Now if I could discover the father too!—His lordship's visit will be too late in the evening, I fancy; the lady will not be at home; but before she goes, once more to my old trade of eaves-dropping about her apartments! The old gentleman and she are certainly together, and their conversation perhaps may be curious. At all events, Lady Alton must be gratified. Men of letters never get any thing of their patrons, but by sacrificing to their foibles. [Exit.]

SCENE II.

AMELIA'S Apartment.

SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS *and* AMELIA *discovered sitting.*

Sir Wil. Every word you utter touches me to the soul. Nothing but such noble sentiments could have supported your spirit under so many misfortunes.

Amel. Perhaps it is to my misfortunes that I owe those sentiments; had I been brought up in ease and luxury, my mind, which has learnt fortitude from distress, might have been enfeebled by prosperity.

Sir Wil. Thou most amiable of thy sex, I conjure thee to hide nothing from me. You say you were born at Aberdeen; you confess that you are derived from one of those unhappy families who suffered themselves to be so fatally deluded, and drawn from their allegiance to the best of kings. Why, why then,

will you not tell me all? Why do you endeavour to conceal your name and family?

Amel. My duty to my family obliges me to silence. My father's life is forfeited by the sentence of the law; and he owes his existence at this hour to flight or secrecy. He may be in England; he may, for aught I know, be in London; and the divulging my name and family might create a fresh search after him, and expose him to new perils. Your conversation, it is true, has inspired me with respect and tenderness; but yet you are a stranger to me; I have reason to fear every thing, and one word may undo me.

Sir Wil. Alas! one word may make us both happy. Tell me; of what age were you when your cruel fortune separated you from your father?

Amel. An infant; so young, that I have not the least traces of him in my memory.

Sir Wil. And your mother; what became of her?

Amel. She, as I have often heard, was carried off by a fever, while she was preparing to embark with me, to follow the fortunes of my father. He, driven almost to despair by this last stroke of ill fortune, continually shifted his place of residence abroad; but for some years past, whether by his death, the miscarriage of letters, the infidelity of friends, or other accidents, I have not received the least intelligence of him: and now I almost begin to despair of hearing of him again, though I still persist in my inquiries.

Sir Wil. (*Rising.*) It must be so; it is as I imagined. All these touching circumstances are melancholy witnesses of the truth of it. Yes, my child! I am that unhappy father whom you lost so early: I am that unfortunate husband, whom death and my unhappy fate, almost at the very same period, divorced from the best of wives; I am—I am Sir William Douglas.

Amel. Sir William Douglas! have I lived to see

my father ! then heaven has heard my prayers ; this is the first moment of my unfortunate life. (*Embracing.*)—And yet your presence here fills me with apprehensions ; I tremble for your safety, for your life ; how durst you venture your person in this kingdom ? how can you expose yourself to the danger of discovery in this town ? My whole soul is in a tumult of fear and joy.

Sir Wil. Do not be alarmed, my Amelia ; fear nothing ; heaven begins to smile upon my fortune. To find thee so unexpectedly, to find thee with a mind so superior to distress, softens the anguish of my past life, and gives me happy omens of the future.

Amel. Oh, sir ! by the joy I receive from the embraces of a father, let me conjure you to provide for your safety ! do not expose me to the horror of losing you for ever ! Quit this town immediately ; every moment that you remain in it, is at the hazard of your life ; I am ready to accompany you to any part of the world.

Sir Wil. My dear child ! how I grieve that your youth and virtue should be involved in my misfortunes ! Yes, we will quit this kingdom ; prepare for your departure, and we may leave London this evening.

Enter OWEN hastily.

Ha ! Owen ! thou art come at a happy moment ; I have found my daughter. This is your young mistress, the paragon of her sex, my dear, my amiable Amelia.

Owen. Oh, sir, this is no time for congratulation. You are in the most imminent danger.

Sir Wil. What is the matter ?

Owen. The officers of government are at this instant in the house. I saw them enter ; I heard them say they had authority to apprehend some suspected

person, and I ran immediately to inform you of your danger.

Amel. Oh, heaven ! My father, what will you do ?

Owen. Do not be alarmed, sir ; we are two ; we are armed ; and we may perhaps be able to make our way through them ; I will stand by you to the last drop of my blood.

Sir Wil. Thou faithful creature ! Stay, Owen ; our fears may betray us ; till we are sure we are attacked, let us shew no signs of opposition.

Enter MOLLY, hastily.

Mol. My dear mistress ! we are ruined ; we are undone for ever.

Amel. There are officers of justice in the house ; I have heard it ; tell me, tell me this instant, whom do they seek for ?

Mol. For you, madam ; for you ; they have a warrant to apprehend you, they say.

Amel. But they have no warrant to apprehend any body else ?

Mol. No, madam ; nobody else ; but I will follow you to the end of the world.

Amel. My dear Polly, I did not mean you. Retire, sir ! (*To SIR WILLIAM.*) For heaven's sake leave me to their mercy ; they can have no facts against me ; my life has been as innocent as unfortunate, and I must soon be released.

Sir Wil. No, my child ; I will not leave thee.

Mol. My child ! This is Sir William Douglas then, as sure as I am alive !

Sir Wil. Besides, retiring at such a time might create suspicion, and incur the danger we would wish to avoid.

Mol. They will be in the room in a moment ; I think I hear them upon the stairs ; they would have been here before me, if Mr Freeport had not come in and stopt them.

Sir Wil. Courage, my dear Amelia!

Amel. Alas, sir! I have no terrors but for you!

Owen. They are here, sir.

Mol. Oh, lord! here they are indeed; I am frightened out of my wits.

Enter MRS GOODMAN, FREEPORT, and Officer.

Free. A warrant to seize her? A harmless young woman? it is impossible.

Offi. Pardon me, sir; if the young lady goes by the name of Amelia Walton, I have a warrant to apprehend her.

Free. On what account?

Offi. As a dangerous person.

Free. Dangerous!

Offi. Yes, sir; suspected of disaffection and treasonable practices.

Amel. I am the unhappy object of your search, sir; give me leave to know the substance of the accusation.

Offi. I cannot tell you particulars, madam: but information upon oath has been made against you, and I am ordered to apprehend you.

Mrs Good. But you will accept of bail, sir? I will be bound for all I am worth in the world.

Offi. In these cases, madam, bail is not usual; and if ever accepted at all, it is excessively high, and given by persons of very large property and known character.

Free. Well; my property is large enough, and my character very well known. My name is Freeport.

Offi. I know you very well, sir.

Free. I'll answer for her appearance; I'll be bound in a penalty of five hundred pounds, a thousand, two thousand, or what sum you please.

Offi. And will you enter into the recognizance immediately?

Free. With all my heart, come along. (*Going.*

Off. And are you in earnest, sir ?

Free. Ay, to be sure. Why not ?

Off. Because, sir, I'll venture to say there are but few people that place their money on such securities.

Free. So much the worse ; he who can employ it in doing good, places it on the best security, and puts it out at the highest interest in the world.

(Exit with the Officer.)

Manent SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS, &c.

Sir Wil. I can hardly trust my eyes and ears ; who is this benevolent gentleman ?

Mrs Good. I don't wonder you are surprised at Mr Freeport's manner of proceeding, sir ; but it is his way. He is not a man of compliment ; but he does the most essential service in less time than others take in making protestations.

Mol. Here he is again ; heaven reward him !

Re-enter FREEPORT.

Free. So ! that matter is dispatched ; now to our other affairs ! this is a busy day with me.—Look ye, Sir William ; we must be brief ; there is no time to be lost.

Sir Wil. How ! am I betrayed then ?

Free. Betrayed ! no ; but you are discovered.

Owen. What ! my master discovered !

(Offers to draw.)

Free. *(To OWEN.)* Nay, never clap thy hand to thy sword, old Trusty ! your master is in danger, it is true ; but it is not from me, I promise you. Go, and get him a post-chaise ; and let him pack off this instant ; that is the best way of shewing your attachment to him at present.—Twenty years, Sir William, have not made so great an alteration in you, but I knew you the moment I saw you.

Mrs Good. Harbour no distrust of Mr Freeport, sir ; he is one of the worthiest men living.

Amel. I know his worthiness. His behaviour to the officer but this moment, uncommonly generous as it appeared, is not the first testimony he has given me to-day of his noble disposition.

Free. Noble! pshaw! nonsense!

Sir Wil. (*To FREEPORT.*) Sir, the kind manner in which you have been pleased to interest yourself in my affairs, has almost as much overpowered me, as if you had surprised me with hostile proceedings. Which way shall I thank you for your goodness to me and my Amelia?

Free. Don't thank me at all; when you are out of danger, perhaps, I may make a proposal to you, that will not be disagreeable; at present think of nothing but your escape; for I should not be surprised, if they were very shortly to make you the same compliment they have paid to Amelia; and in your case, which is really a serious one, they might not be in the humour to accept of my recognizance.

Mrs Good. Mr Freeport is in the right, sir; every moment of delay is hazardous; let us prevail upon you to depart immediately! Amelia being wholly innocent, cannot be long detained in custody, and as soon as she is released, I will bring her to you, wherever you shall appoint.

Free. Ay, ay, you must be gone directly, sir! and as you may want ready money upon the road, take my purse. (*Offering his purse.*)

Sir Wil. No, thou truest friend, I have no need of it. With what wonderful goodness have you acted towards me and my unhappy family!

Free. Wonderful! why wonderful? Would not you have done the same, if you had been in my place?

Sir Wil. I hope I should.

Free. Well then, where is the wonder of it? Come, come, let us see you make ready for your departure.

Sir Wil. Thou best of men!

Free. Best of men ! Heaven forbid ! I have done no more than my duty by you. I am a man myself ; and am bound to be a friend to all mankind, you know. [*Excunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

SPATTER'S Apartment.

LADY ALTON, *with a letter in her hand*, and SPATTER.

Lady Al. Thanks, my good Spatter, many thanks for this precious epistle ! more precious at present than one of Ovid, Pliny, or Cicero. It is at once a billet-doux and a state paper ; and serves at the same time to convict her of conspiring against me and the public.

Spat. It is a valuable manuscript, to be sure, madam ; and yet that is but the least half of my discoveries since I left your ladyship.

Lady Al. But is not this half, according to the Grecian axiom, more than the whole, Mr Spatter ?

Spat. When you know the whole, I believe you will think not, madam.

Lady Al. Out with it then ! I am impatient to be mistress of it.

Spat. By intercepting this letter of Lord Falbridge's,

your ladyship sees that we have discovered Amelia to be the daughter of Sir William Douglas.

Lady Al. True.

Spat. But what would you say, madam, if I had found out the father himself too?

Lady Al. Sir William Douglas!

Spat. Is now in this house, madam.

Lady Al. Impossible!

Spat. Nothing more certain. He arrived this morning under a feigned name. I saw him conducted to Amelia's apartment. This raised my suspicion, and I planted myself at her door, with all the circum-spection of a spy, and address of a chambermaid. There I overheard their mutual acknowledgments of each other; and a curious interview it was. First they wept for grief; and then they wept for joy; and then they wept for grief again. Their tears, however, were soon interrupted by the arrival of the officer, whose purpose was partly defeated, as you have already heard, by the intervention of Freeport.

Lady Al. Yes, the brute! But that delay was not half so unfortunate as your discoveries have been happy, Spatter; for my revenge shall now return on them with redoubled fury.—Issue out upon them once more; see what they are about; and be sure to give me immediate notice if Lord Falbridge should come. *(Going.*

Spat. Stay, madam. After intercepting the letter, I sent for your ladyship, that, at so critical a juncture, you might be present on the spot: and if you go home again, we shall lose time, which perhaps may be precious, in running to and fro. Suppose you step into the study till I return. You will find my own answer to my last pamphlet, and the two first sheets of the next month's magazine, to amuse you.

Lady Al. Planned like a wise general! Do you then go, and reconnoitre the enemy, while I lie here in ambush to reinforce you as soon as there shall be

occasion. Do but give the word, we'll make a vigorous sally, put their whole body to rout, and take Amelia and her father prisoners. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.

*The Hall.*FREEPORT *alone.*

I don't know how it is, but this Amelia here runs in my head strangely. Ever since I saw her, I think of nothing else. I am not in love with her.—In love with her! that's nonsense. But I feel a kind of uneasiness, a sort of pain that—I don't know what to make of it—I'll speak to her father about her.

Enter OWEN.

Well, old true-penny! Have you prepared every thing for Sir William's departure?

Owen. We had need be going, indeed, sir; we are in continual danger while we stay here. Who d'ye think lodged the information against madam Amelia?

Free. Who?

Owen. A person who lodges in this very house, it seems: one Mr Spatter, sir.

Free. Spatter! how d'ye know?

Owen. I had it from one of the officers who came to apprehend her.

Free. A dog! I could find it in my heart to cut off his ears with my own hands, and save him the disgrace of the pillory.

Owen. My poor master is always unfortunate. If Lord Brumpton had lived a week longer, Sir William

might perhaps have been out of the reach of their malice.

Free. Lord Brumpton?

Owen. Yes, sir. He was soliciting my master's pardon; but died before he had accomplished his benevolent intentions.

Free. Ha! A thought strikes me. (*Apart.*) Hark ye, friend, (*To OWEN.*) does Sir William know the present Lord Brumpton?

Owen. No, sir. The late lord had no children, or near relations, living; and, indeed, he was the only surviving friend of my poor master in the kingdom.

Free. Is the chaise at the door?

Owen. Not yet, sir; but I expect it every moment.

Free. Run to your master, and desire him not to go till I see him. Tell him I am going out upon his business, and will be back within this hour.

Owen. I will let him know immediately.—Ah, you're a true friend indeed, sir!

(*Shaking him earnestly by the hand.*)

Free. Pooh! pr'ythee!

Owen. Ah! Heaven preserve you! (*Exit.*)

FREEPORT *alone.*

Fare thee well, old Honesty!—By the death of Lord Brumpton, without children or near relations living, as Owen says, the title and estate came to my old friend Jack Brumpton, of Liverpool; who is of a distant branch; a fortieth cousin, for aught I know; who has past his whole life in a computing-house; and who, a few years ago, no more dreamt of being a lord than Grand Signior, or Great Mogul. He has so good a heart, that I believe it is impossible even for a title to corrupt it. I know he is in town; so I'll go to him immediately; acquaint him with the obligation entailed on him to be of service to Sir William, and make him heir to the benevolence of his predecessor as well as his wealth and dignity. (*Going,*

stops.) Who's here? Mrs Goodman and Spatter, as I live! Oh the dog! my blood rises at the villain. If I don't take care, I shall incur an action of battery for caning the rascal.

Enter MRS GOODMAN and SPATTER.

Mrs Good. In short, Mr Spatter, I must beg leave to give you warning, and desire that you would provide yourself with another lodging as soon as possible.

Spat. What now? What the deuce is the matter with you, Mrs Goodman?

Mrs Good. I see now the meaning of Lady Alton's recommendation of such a lodger to my house, as well as of her visits to Amelia, and her frequent conferences with you, sir.

Spat. The woman is certainly out of her senses.

Free. What has been laid to your charge is no joke, sir.

Spat. What! are you there to keep up her back-hand, Mr Freeport? What is all this?

Free. You are found out to be a spy, sir.

Mrs Good. A person who pries in the secrets of families merely to betray them.

Free. An informer.

Mrs Good. An eaves-dropper.

Free. A liar.

Spat. Right-hand and left! this is too much: what the plague is the matter with you both?

Mrs Good. Did not you go and tell that Amelia was a native of Scotland?

Spat. Well; and where's the harm of being born in Scotland?

Free. None; except by your malicious interpretation, rascal; by means of which you made it the ground of an information against her, and were the cause of her being apprehended.

Spat. And you were the cause of her being released: every man in his way, Mr Freeport!

Free. Look you, sirrah ! you are one of those wretches, who miscall themselves authors ; a fellow, whose heart, and tongue, and pen, are equally scandalous ; who try to insinuate yourself every where, to make mischief if there is none, and to increase it if you find any.—But if you fetch and carry like a spaniel, you must be treated like one. I have observed that you are always loitering in the passages ; but if I catch you within the wind of a door again, I'll beat you till you are as black as your own ink, sirrah. Now you know my mind. [Exit.]

Spat. Very civil and very polite, indeed, Mr Freeport. Ha ! here comes my friend Lord Falbridge.

Mrs Good. Lord Falbridge your friend ! For shame, Mr Spatter !

Enter LORD FALBRIDGE hastily.

Ld Fal. Mrs Goodman, I rejoice to see you. Tell me, how does my Amelia ? I have heard of her distress, and flew to her relief. Was she alarmed ? Was she terrified ?

Mrs Good. Not much, my lord : she sustained the shock with the same constancy that she endures every other affliction.

Ld Fal. I know her merit ; I am too well acquainted with her greatness of soul ; and hope it is not yet too late for me to do justice to her virtue.—Go to her, my dear Mrs Goodman, and tell her I beg to see her : I have something that concerns her very nearly to impart to her.

Mrs Good. I will, my lord.

[Exit.]

Ld Fal. Oh, Mr Spatter ! I did not see you. What have you got there, sir ?

(Seeing a paper in his hand.)

Spat. Proposals for a new work, my lord ! May I beg the honour of your lordship's name among my list of subscribers ?

Ld Fal. With all my heart, sir. I am already in your debt on another account.

(*Pulling out his purse.*

Spat. To me, my lord? You do me a great deal of honour; I should be very proud to be of the least service to your lordship.

Ld Fal. You have been of great service to me already, sir. It was you, I find, lodged the information against this young lady.

Spat. I did no more than my duty, my lord.

Ld Fal. Yes, you did me a favour, sir. I consider only the deed, and put the intention quite out of the question. You meant to do Amelia a prejudice, and you have done me a service: for, by endeavouring to bring her into distress, you gave me an opportunity of shewing my eagerness to relieve her.—There, sir! there is for the good you have done, while you meant to make mischief. (*Giving him a few guineas.*) But take this along with it; if you ever presume to mention the name of Amelia any more, or give yourself the least concern about her, or her affairs, I'll—

Spat. I am obliged to your lordship. (*Bowing.*

Ld Fal. Be gone, sir, leave me.

Spat. Your most humble servant, my lord!—So! I am abused by every body, and yet I get money by every body;—egad, I believe I am a much cleverer fellow than I thought I was. [*Exit.*

LORD FALBRIDGE *alone.*

Alas! I am afraid that Amelia will not see me! What would I not suffer to repair the affront that I have offered her!

Enter MOLLY.

Ha! Polly! how much am I obliged to you for sending me notice of Amelia's distress!

Mol. Hush, my lord! Speak lower, for heaven's sake! My mistress has so often forbid me to tell any

thing about her, that I tremble still at the thoughts of the confidence I have put in you. I was bewitched, I think, to let you know who she was.

Ld Fal. You were inspired, Polly, heaven inspired you to acquaint me with all her distresses, that I might recommend myself to her favour again, by my zeal to serve her, though against her will.

Mol. That was the reason I told you, for else I am sure I should die with grief to give her the least uneasiness.

Ld Fal. But may I hope to see Amelia? Will she let me speak with her?

Mol. No indeed, my lord, she is so offended at your late behaviour, that she will not even suffer us to mention your name to her.

Ld Fal. Death and confusion! What a wretch have I made myself! Go, Polly, go and let her know that I must speak with her; inform her that I have been active for her welfare, and have authority to release her from the information lodged against her.

Mol. I will let her know your anxiety, my lord, but indeed I am afraid she will not see you.

Ld Fal. She must, Polly, she must. The agonies of my mind are intolerable: tell her, she must come, if it be but for a moment, or else, in the bitterness of despair, I fear I shall break into her apartment, and throw myself at her feet.

Mol. Lud! you frighten me out of my wits! Have a little patience, and I'll tell my mistress what a talking you are in.

Ld Fal. Fly, then! I can taste no comfort, till I hear her resolution. *(Exit MOLLY.)*

LORD FALBRIDGE *alone.*

How culpably have I acted towards the most amiable of her sex! But I will make her every reparation in my power. The warmth and sincerity of my

repentance shall extort forgiveness from her. By heaven, she comes!—Death! how sensibly does an ungenerous action abase us! I am conscious of the superiority of her virtue, and almost dread the encounter.

Enter AMELIA.

Amel. I understand, my lord, that by your application I am held free of the charge laid against me; and that I am once more entirely at liberty. I am truly sensible of your good offices, and thank you for the trouble you have taken. (*Going.*

Ld Fal. Stay, madam! do not leave me in still greater distraction than you found me. If my zeal to serve you has had any weight with you, it must have inspired you with more favourable dispositions towards me.

Amel. You must pardon me, my lord, if I cannot so soon forget a very late transaction. After that all your proceedings alarm me: nay, even your present zeal to serve me creates new suspicions, while I cannot but be doubtful of the motives from which it proceeds.

Ld Fal. Cruel Amelia! for, guilty as I am, I must complain, since it was your own diffidence that was in part the occasion of my crime.—Why did you conceal your rank and condition from me? Why did not you tell me, that you were the daughter of the unhappy Sir William Douglas?

Amel. Who told you that I was so, my lord?

Ld Fal. Nay, do not deny it now: it is in vain to attempt to conceal it any longer; it was the main purport of my letter to apprise you of my knowledge of it.

Amel. Your letter, my lord!

Ld Fal. Yes, wild as it was, it was the offspring of compunction and remorse; and if it conveyed the

dictates of my soul, it spoke me the truest of penitents. You did not disdain to read it, sure?

Amel. Indeed, my lord, I never received any letter from you.

Ld Fal. Not received any! I sent it this very morning. My own servant was the messenger. What can this mean? Has he betrayed me? At present, suffer me to compensate, as far as possible, for the wrongs I have done you: receive my hand and heart, and let an honourable marriage obliterate the very idea of my past conduct.

Amel. No, my lord, you have discovered me, it is true: I am the daughter of Sir William Douglas. Judge for yourself then, and think how I ought to look upon a man who has insulted my distress, and endeavoured to tempt me to dishonour my family.

Ld Fal. Your justice must acquit me of the intention of that offence, since at that time I was ignorant of your illustrious extraction.

Amel. It may be so, yet your excuse is but an aggravation of the crime. You imagined me, perhaps, to be of as low and mean an origin as you thought me poor and unhappy. You supposed that I had no title to any dowry but my honour, no dependence but on my virtue, and yet you attempted to rob me of that virtue, which was the only jewel that could raise the meanness of my birth, or support me under my misfortunes; which, instead of relieving, you chose to make the pander to your vile inclinations.

Ld Fal. Thou most amiable of thy sex, how I adore thee! Even thy resentment renders thee more lovely in my eyes, and makes thee, if possible, dearer to me than ever. Nothing but our union can ever make me happy.

Amel. Such an union must not, cannot be.

Ld Fal. Why? What should forbid it?

Amel. My father.

Ld Fal. Your father! where is he? In whatever part of the world he now resides, I will convey you to him, and he shall ratify our happiness.

Enter MOLLY hastily.

Mol. Oh Lord, madam! here's the angry lady coming again—she that made such a racket this morning!

Amel. Lady Alton?

Mol. Yes, madam.

Ld Fal. Lady Alton! Confusion! Stay, madam.

(To AMELIA, who is going.)

Amel. No, my lord, I have endured one affront from her already to-day; why should I expose myself to a second? Her ladyship, you know, has a prior claim to your attention.

(Exit.)

Ld Fal. Distraction! I had a thousand things to say to her.—Go, my dear Polly, follow my Amelia! Plead earnestly in my behalf, urge all the tenderest things that fancy can suggest, and return to me as soon as Lady Alton is departed.

Mol. I will, my lord. Oh lud! here she is, as I am alive!

[Exit.]

Ld Fal. Abandoned by Amelia! and hunted by this fury! I shall run wild.

Enter LADY ALTON.

Lady Al. You may well turn away from me; at length I have full conviction of your baseness. I am now assured of my own shame, and your falsehood. Perfidious monster!

Ld Fal. It is unjust to tax me with perfidy, madam. I have rather acted with too much sincerity. I long ago frankly declared to you the utter impossibility of our reconciliation.

Lady Al. What! after having made your addresses to me? after having sworn the most inviolable affection for me? Oh, thou arch-deceiver!

Ld Fal. I never deceived you : when I professed a passion, I really entertained one ; when I made my addresses to you, I wished to call you my wife.

Lady Al. And what can you alledge in excuse of your falsehood ? Have you not been guilty of the blackest perjury ?

Ld Fal. The change of my sentiments needs no excuse from me, madam ; you were yourself the occasion of it.—In spite of the torrent of fashion, and the practice of too many others of my rank in life, I have a relish for domestic happiness, and have always wished for a wife who might render my home a delightful refuge from the cares and bustle of the world abroad. These were my views with you ; but, thank heaven, your outrageous temper happily betrayed itself in good time, and convinced me that my sole aim in marriage would be frustrated : for I could neither have been happy myself, nor have made you so.

Lady Al. Paltry evasion ! You have abandoned me for your Amelia ; you have meanly quitted a person of letters, a woman of rank and condition, for an illiterate vagabond, a needy adventurer.

Ld Fal. The person you mention, madam, is indeed the opposite of yourself ; she is all meekness, grace, and virtue.

Lady Al. Provoking traitor ! You urge me past all sufferance. I meant to expostulate, but you oblige me to invective.—But, have a care ! You are not so secure as you suppose yourself ; and I may revenge myself sooner than you imagine.

Ld Fal. I am aware of your vindictive disposition, madam ; for I know that you are more envious than jealous, and rather violent than tender ; but the present object of my affections shall be placed above your resentment, and challenge your respect.

Lady Al. Away, fond man ! I know that object of your affections better than yourself ; I know who she is ; I know who the stranger is that arrived for

her this morning, I know all: men more powerful than yourself shall be apprised of the whole immediately, and within these two hours, nay, within this hour, you shall see the unworthy object, for which you have slighted me, with all that is dear to her and you, torn away from you perforce. (*Going.*)

Ld Fal. Ha! how's this? Stay, madam! Explain yourself! But one word, do but hear me.

Lady Al. No, I disdain to hear you: I scorn an explanation. I have discovered the contemptible cause of your inconstancy, and know you to be mean, base, false, treacherous, and perfidious. You have forfeited my tenderness, and be assured you shall feel the effects of my revenge. (*Exit.*)

Ld Fal. What does she mean? The stranger that arrived to day!—That arrived for my Amelia! Sure it cannot be. (*Pausing.*) Is it possible that— (*Re-enter MOLLY.*) Ha, Polly! explain these riddles to me. Lady Alton threatens me, she threatens my Amelia: does she know any thing? Her fury will transport her to every extravagance: how dreadful is jealousy in a woman!

Mol. Ay, it is a dreadful thing, indeed, my lord. Well, heaven send me always to be in love, and never to be jealous!

Ld Fal. But she talked of tearing Amelia from me perforce—and then some stranger—she threatens him too; what is it she means?

Mol. What, a gentleman that came to madam Amelia! (*Alarmed.*)

Ld Fal. Yes, to Amelia; and arrived this very day, she says.

Mol. We are ruin'd for ever: she means Sir William Douglas!

Ld Fal. The father of my Amelia! Is he here?

Mol. Yes, my lord, I was bound to secrecy; but I can't help telling you the whole truth, because I

am sure you will do all in your power to be of service to us.

Ld Fal. You know my whole soul, Polly: this outrageous woman's malice shall be defeated.

Mol. Heaven send it may.

Ld Fal. Be assured it shall: do not alarm your mistress, I fly to serve her, and will return as soon as possible.

Mol. I shall be miserable till we see you again, my lord. [Exit.

Ld Fal. And now, good heaven! that art the protection of innocence, second my endeavours! enable me to repair the affront I have offered to injured virtue, and let me relieve the unhappy from their distresses! [Exit.

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

Continues.

LORD FALBRIDGE and MOLLY meeting.

Mol. Oh, my lord! I am glad to see you returned.

Ld Fal. Where is your mistress? (*Eagerly.*

Mol. In her own chamber.

Ld Fal. And where is Sir William Douglas?

Mol. With my mistress.

Ld Fal. And have there been no officers here to apprehend them?

Mol. Officers! No, my lord. Officers! you frighten me. I was in hopes, by seeing your lordship so soon again, that there were some good news for us.

Ld Fal. Never was any thing so unfortunate. The noble persons, to whom I meant to make application, were out of town; nor could by any means be seen or spoken with till to-morrow morning; and, to add to my distraction, I learnt that a new information had been made, and a new warrant issued to apprehend Sir William Douglas and Amelia.

Mol. O dear! What can we do then?

Ld Fal. Do! I shall run mad. Go, my dear Polly, go to your mistress and Sir William, and inform them of their danger. Every moment is precious, but perhaps they may yet have time to escape.

Mol. I will, my lord!

(*Going.*)

Ld Fal. Stay! (*MOLLY returns.*) My chariot is at the door; tell them not to wait for any other carriage, but to get into that, and drive away immediately.

Mol. I will, my lord. Oh dear! I never was so terrified in all my life.

(*Exit.*)

LORD FALBRIDGE *alone.*

If I can but save them now, we may gain time for mediation. Ha! what noise? Are the officers coming? Who's here?

Enter LA FRANCE.

La Fr. Milor, Mons. le Duc de—

Ld Fal. Sirrah! Villain! You have been the occasion of all this mischief. By your carelessness, or treachery, Lady Alton has intercepted my letter to Amelia.

La Fr. Ledy Alton?

Ld Fal. Yes, dog; did not I send you here this morning with a letter?

La Fr. Oui, Milor.

Ld Fal. And did you bring it here, rascal?

La Fr. Oui, Milor.

Ld Fal. No, sirrah, you did not bring it; the lady never received any letter from me, she told me so herself—whom did you give it to? (*LA FRANCE hesitates.*) Speak, sirrah, or I'll shake your soul out of your body. (*Shaking him.*)

La Fr. I give it to——

Ld Fal. Who, rascal?

La Fr. Monsieur Spatter.

Ld Fal. Mr Spatter?

La Fr. Oui, Milor, he promis to give it to Mademoiselle Amelie, vid his own hand.

Ld Fal. I shall soon know the truth of that, sir, for yonder is Mr Spatter himself: run, and tell him I desire to speak with him!

La Fr. Oui, Milor;—*ma foi*, I was very near kesh; I never was in more *vilain embarras* in all my life. (*Exit.*)

LORD FALBRIDGE *alone.*

My letter's falling into the hands of that fellow accounts for every thing. The contents instructed him concerning Amelia. What a wretch I am! Destined every way to be of prejudice to that virtue which I am bound to adore.

Re-enter LA FRANCE with SPATTER.

Spat. Monsieur la France tells me that your lordship desires to speak with me; what are your commands, my lord? (*Pertly.*)

Ld Fal. The easy impudence of the rascal puts me out of all patience. (*To himself.*)

Spat. My lord!

Ld Fal. The last time I saw you, sir, you were rewarded for the good you had done ; you must expect now to be chastised for your mischief.

Spat. Mischief, my lord ?

Ld Fal. Yes, sir ; where is that letter of mine, which La France tells me he gave you to deliver to a young lady of this house ?

Spat. Oh the devil ! (*Apart.*) Letter, my lord ?
(*Hesitates.*)

Ld Fal. Yes, letter, sir ; did not you give it him, La France ?

La Fr. Oui, Milor !

Spat. Y—e—e—s, yes, my lord, I had the letter of Monsieur la France, to be sure, my lord, but——but——

Ld Fal. But what, sirrah ? give me the letter immediately, and if I find that the seal has been broken, I will break every bone in your skin.

Spat. For heaven's sake, my lord !—(*Feeling in his pockets.*) I—I—I have not got the letter about me at present, my lord ; but if you will give me leave to step to my apartment, I'll bring it you immediately.

(*Offering to go.*)

Ld Fal. (*Stopping him.*) No, no, that will not do, sir ; you shall not stir, I promise you.—Look ye, rascal ! tell me, what is become of my letter, or I will be the death of you this instant. (*Drawing.*)

Spat. (*Kneeling.*) Put up your sword, my lord ; put up your sword ; and I will tell you every thing in the world. Indeed I will.

Ld Fal. Well, sir, be quick then !

(*Putting up his sword.*)

Spat. Lady Alton——

Ld Fal. Lady Alton ! I thought so—Go on, sir.

Spat. Lady Alton, my lord, desired me to procure her all the intelligence in my power concerning every thing that past between your lordship and Amelia.

Ld Fal. Well, sir, what then?

Spat. A little patience, I entreat your lordship. Accordingly, to oblige her ladyship—one must oblige the ladies, you know, my lord—I did keep a pretty sharp look-out, I must confess; and this morning, meeting Monsieur la France, with a letter from your lordship in his charge, I very readily gave him five guineas of her ladyship's bounty-money, to put it into my hands.

La Fr. *Oh Diable! me voila perdu!* (*Aside.*

Ld Fal. How! A bribe, rascal?

(*To LA FRANCE.*

La Fr. *Ah, Milor!*

(*On his knees.*

Spat. At the same price for every letter, he would have sold a whole mail, my lord.

La Fr. *Ayez pitie de moi.* (*Holding up his hands.*

Ld Fal. Betray the confidence I reposed in you!

Spat. He offered me the letter of his own accord, my lord.

La Fr. No such ting, *en verité*, *Milor!*

Spat. Very true, I can assure your lordship.

Ld Fal. Well, well; I shall chastise him at my leisure. At present, sir, do you return me my letter.

Spat. I—I have it not about me, my lord.

Ld Fal. Where is it, rascal? tell me this instant, or—

La Fr. Ledy Alton—

Ld Fal. (*To SPATTER.*) What! has she got it? speak, sirrah!

Spat. She has indeed, my lord.

Ld Fal. Are not you a couple of villains?

La Fr. Oui, Milor.

Spat. Yes, my lord!

} (*Both speak at once.*

Ld Fal. (*To SPAT.*) But hold, sir! a word more with you! As you seem to be Lady Alton's chief agent, I must desire some further information from you.

Spat. Any thing in my power, my lord.

Ld Fal. I can account for her knowledge of Amelia by means of my letter: but how did she discover Sir William Douglas?

Spat. I told her, my lord.

Ld Fal. But how did you discover him yourself?

Spat. By listening, my lord.

Ld Fal. By listening!

Spat. Yes, by listening, my lord! Let me but once be about a house, and I'll engage to clear it, like a ventilator, my lord. There is not a door to a single apartment in this house but I have planted my ear at the key-hole.

Ld Fal. And were these the means by which you procured your intelligence?

Spat. Yes, my lord.

Ld Fal. Impossible.

Spat. Oh dear! nothing so easy; this is nothing at all, my lord! I have given an account of the plays in our Journal, for three months together, without being nearer the stage than the pit-passage; and I have collected the debates of a whole session, for the magazine, only by attending in the lobby.

Ld Fal. Precious rascal!—Ha! who comes here? Lady Alton herself again, as I live!

Spat. (*Apart.*) The devil she is! I wish I was out of the house.

Enter LADY ALTON.

Lady Al. What! still here, my lord? still witnessing to your own shame and the justice of my resentment?

Ld Fal. Yes, I am still here, madam, and sorry to be made a witness of your cruelty and meanness, of your descending to arts so much beneath your rank, and practices so unworthy of your sex.

Lady Al. You talk in riddles, my lord.

Ld Fal. This gentleman shall explain them. Here, madam! here is the engine of your malice, the in-

strument of your vengeance, your prime minister, Mr Spatter.

Lady Al. What have I to do with Mr Spatter?

Ld Fal. To do mischief, to intercept letters, and break them open, to overhear private conversations, and betray them to—

Lady Al. Have you laid any thing of this kind to my charge, sir? (To SPATTER.

Spat. I have been obliged to speak the truth, though much against my will, indeed, madam.

Lady Al. The truth! thou father of lies, did ever any truth proceed from thee? What! is his lordship your new patron! A fit Mæcenas for thee, thou scandal to the belles lettres!

Ld Fal. Your rage at this detection is but a fresh conviction of your guilt.

Lady Al. Do not triumph, monster! you shall still feel the superiority I have over you. The object of your wishes is no longer under your protection, the officers of the government entered the house at the same time with myself, with a warrant to seize both Amelia and her father.

Ld Fal. Confusion! Are not they gone then? La France! villain! run, and bring me word!

La Fr. I go, Milor. (Exit.

Lady Al. Do not flatter yourself with any hopes; they have not escaped; here they are, secured in proper hands.

Ld Fal. Death and distraction! now I am completely miserable.

Enter SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS, AMELIA, OWEN, and Officers.

Lady Al. Yes, your misery is complete indeed; and so shall be my revenge. Oh! your servant, madam! (Turning to AMELIA.) You now see to what a condition your pride and obstinacy have reduced

you. Did not I bid you tremble at the consequences?

Amel. It was here alone that I was vulnerable. (*Holding her father's hand.*) Oh, madam, (*Turning to LADY ALTON.*) by the virtues that should adorn your rank, by the tenderness of your sex, I conjure you pity my distress! do but release my father, and there are no concessions, however humiliating, which you may not exact from me.

Lady Al. Those concessions now come too late, madam. If I were even inclined to relieve you, at present it is not in my power. (*Haughtily.*) Lord Falbridge perhaps may have more interest.

(*With a sneer.*)

Ld Fal. Cruel, insulting woman! (*To LADY ALTON.*) Do not alarm yourself, my Amelia!—Do not be concerned, sir! (*To SIR WILLIAM.*) Your enemies shall still be disappointed. Although ignorant of your arrival, I have for some time past exerted all my interest in your favour, and by the mediation of those still more powerful, I do not despair of success. Your case is truly a compassionate one, and in that breast, from which alone mercy can proceed, thank heaven, there is the greatest reason to expect it.

Sir Wil. I am obliged to you for your concern; sir.

Ld Fal. Oh, I owe you all this, and much more—But this is no time to speak of my offences, or repentance.

Lady Al. This is mere trifling. I thought you knew on what occasion you came hither, sir.

(*To the Officer.*)

Offi. Your reproof is too just, madam. I attend you, sir.

(*To SIR WILLIAM.*)

Ld Fal. Hold! Let me prevail on you, sir, (*To the Officer.*) to suffer them to remain here till tomorrow morning. I will answer for the consequences.

Offi. Pardon me, my lord! we should be happy to oblige you, but we must discharge the duty of our office.

Ld Fal. Distraction!

Sir Wil. Come then! we follow you, sir! Be comforted, my Amelia! for my sake be comforted! Wretched as I am, your anxiety shocks me more than my own misfortunes.

(*As they are going out, enter FREEPORT.*)

Free. Hey-day! what now? the officers here again! I thought we had satisfied you this morning. What is the meaning of all this?

Offi. This will inform you, sir.

(*Giving the warrant.*)

Free. How's this? Let me see! (*Reading.*) "This is to require you"—um um—"the bodies of William Ford and Amelia Walton"—um—um—"suspected persons"—um—um—Well! well! I see what this is: but you will accept of bail, sir?

Offi. No, sir; this case is notailable, and we have already been reprimanded for taking your recognizance this morning.

Sir Wil. Thou good man! I shall ever retain the most lively sense of your behaviour; but your kind endeavours to preserve the poor remainder of my proscribed life are in vain. We must submit to our destiny.

(*All going.*)

Free. Hold, hold! one word, I beseech you, sir! (*To the Officer.*) a minute or two will make no difference—Bail then, it seems, will not do, sir?

Offi. No, sir.

Free. Well, well; then I have something here that will perhaps.

(*Feeling in his pocket.*)

Ld Fal. How!

Lady Al. What does he mean?

Free. No, it is not there.—It is in t'other pocket, I believe. Here, Sir William! (*Producing a parchment.*) Ask the gentleman if that will not do.—But,

first of all, read it yourself, and let us hear how you like the contents.

Sir Wil. What do I see! (*Opening and perusing it.*) My pardon! the full and free pardon of my offences! Oh heaven! and is it to you then, to you, sir, that I owe all this? Thus, thus let me shew my gratitude to my benefactor! (*Falling at his feet.*)

Free. Get up, get up, Sir William! Thank heaven and the most gracious of monarchs. You have very little obligation to me, I promise you.

Amel. My father restored! then I am the happiest of women.

Ld Fal. A pardon! I am transported!

Lady Al. How's this? a pardon!

Free. Under the great seal, madam.

Lady Al. Confusion! what, am I baffled at last then? am I disappointed even of my revenge?—Thou officious fool, (*To FREEPORT.*) may these wretches prove as great a torment to you as they have been to me! As for thee, (*To LORD FALBRIDGE.*) thou perfidious monster, may thy guilt prove thy punishment! May you obtain the unworthy union you desire! May your wife prove as false to you as you have been to me! May you be followed, like Orestes, with the furies of a guilty conscience; find your error when it is too late; and die in all the horrors of despair! [*Exit.*]

Free. There goes a woman of quality for you! what little actions, and what a great soul!—Ha! Master Spatter! where are you going?

(*To SPATTER, who is sneaking off.*)

Spat. Following the muse, sir! (*Pointing after LADY ALTON.*) But if you have any further commands, or his lordship should have occasion for me to write his epithalamium—

Ld Fal. Peace, wretch! sleep in a whole skin, and be thankful! I would solicit mercy myself, and have not leisure to punish you. Be gone, sir!

Spat. I am obliged to your lordship—This affair will make a good article for the Evening Post to-night, however. (*Aside, and exit.*)

Sir Wil. How happy has this reverse of fortune made me !—But my surprise is almost equal to my joy. May we beg you, sir, (*To FREEPORT.*) to inform us how your benevolence has effected what seems almost a miracle in my favour ?

Free. In two words then, Sir William ; this happy event is chiefly owing to your old friend, the late Lord Brumpton.

Sir Wil. Lord Brumpton !

Free. Yes ; honest Owen there told me that his lordship had been employed in soliciting your pardon. Did not you, Owen ?

Owen. I did, sir.

Free. Upon hearing that, and perceiving the danger you were in, I went immediately to the present Lord Brumpton, who is a very honest fellow, and one of the oldest acquaintance I have in the world. He, at my instance, immediately made the necessary application ; and guess how agreeably we were surprised to hear that the late lord had already been successful, and that the pardon had been made out on the very morning of the day his lordship died. Away went I, as fast as a pair of horses could carry me, to fetch it ; and should certainly have prevented this last arrest, if the warrant to apprehend you, as dangerous persons, had not issued under your assumed names of William Ford and Amelia Walton, against whom the information had been laid. But, however, it has only served to prevent your running away, when the danger was over ; for at present, Sir William, thank heaven and his majesty, you are a whole man again ; and you have nothing to do but to make a legal appearance, and to plead the pardon I have brought you, to absolve you from all informations.

Ld Fal. Thou honest excellent man ! How happily have you supplied what I failed to accomplish !

Free. Ay, I heard that your lordship had been busy.—You had more friends at court than one, Sir William, I promise you.

Sir Wil. I am overwhelmed with my sudden good fortune, and am poor even in thanks. Teach me, Mr Freeport, teach me how to make some acknowledgment for your extraordinary generosity !

Free. I'll tell you what, Sir William ; notwithstanding your daughter's pride, I took a liking to her the moment I saw her.

Ld Fal. Ha ! What's this ?

Free. What's the matter, my lord ?

Ld Fal. Nothing. Go on, sir !

Free. Why then, to confess the truth, I am afraid that my benevolence, which you have all been pleased to praise so highly, had some little leaven of self-interest in it ; and I was desirous to promote Amelia's happiness more ways than one.

Ld Fal. Then I am the veriest wretch that ever existed.—But take her, sir ! for I must confess that you have deserved her by your proceedings ; and that I, fool and villain that I was, have forfeited her by mine.

(*Going.*)

Free. Hold, hold ! one word before you go, if you please, my lord ! You may kill yourself for aught I know, but you sha'n't lay your death at my door, I promise you. I had a kindness for Amelia, I must confess ; but in the course of my late negotiation for Sir William, hearing of your lordship's pretensions, I dropt all thoughts of her. It is a maxim with me, to do good wherever I can, but always to abstain from doing mischief.—Now, as I can't make the lady happy myself, I would fain put her into the hands of those that can.—So, if you would oblige me, Sir William, let me join these two young folks together, (*Joining their hands.*) and do you say amen to it.

Sir Wil. With all my heart !—You can have no objection, Amelia ? (*AMELIA bursts into tears.*)

Ld Fal. How bitterly do those tears reproach me ! It shall be the whole business of my future life to atone for them.

Amel. Your actions this day, and your solicitude for my father, have redeemed you in my good opinion ; and the consent of Sir William, seconded by so powerful an advocate as Mr Freeport, cannot be contended with. Take my hand, my lord ! a virtuous passion may inhabit the purest breast ; and I am not ashamed to confess, that I had conceived a partiality for you, till your own conduct turned my heart against you ; and if my resentment has given you any pain, when I consider the occasion, I must own that I cannot repent it.

Ld Fal. Mention it no more, my love, I beseech you ! You may justly blame your lover, I confess ; but I will never give you cause to complain of your husband.

Free. I don't believe you will. I give you joy, my lord ! I give you all joy. As for you, madam, (*To AMELIA.*) do but shew the world that you can bear prosperity, as well as you have sustained the shocks of adversity, and there are few women who may not wish to be an Amelia. [*Exeunt.*]

THE
SCHOOL FOR WIVES,
A COMEDY,
IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRE-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

by

Hugh Kelly.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

GENERAL SAVAGE,
BELVILLE,
TORRINGTON,
LEESON,
CAPTAIN SAVAGE,
CONNOLLY,
SPRUCE,
GHASTLY,
LEECH,
CROW,
WOLF,

MISS WALSINGHAM,
MRS BELVILLE,
LADY RACHEL MILDEW,
MRS TEMPEST,
MISS LEESON,
Maid,

Mr King.
Mr Reddish.
Mr Weston.
Mr Palmer.
Mr Brereton.
Mr Moody.
Mr Baddely.
Mr W. Palmer.
Mr Bransby.
Mr Wright.
Mr Ackman.

Mrs Abington.
Miss Younge.
Mrs Hopkins.
Mrs Greville.
Miss Jarratt.
Mrs Millidge.

THE
SCHOOL FOR WIVES.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

An Apartment at BELVILLE'S.

Enter CAPTAIN SAVAGE and MISS WALSINGHAM.

Capt. Ha! ha! ha! Well, Miss Walsingham, this fury is going; what a noble peal she has rung in Belville's ears!

Miss Wal. Did she see you, Captain Savage?

Capt. No, I took care of that: for though she isn't married to my father, she has ten times the influence of a wife, and might injure me not a little with him, if I didn't support her side of the question.

Miss Wal. It was a pleasant conceit of Mr Bel-

ville, to insinuate the poor woman was disordered in her senses!

Capt. And did you observe how the termagant's violence of temper supported the probability of the charge?

Miss Wal. Yes, she became almost frantic in reality, when she found herself treated like a mad woman.

Capt. Belville's affected surprise too was admirable!

Miss Wal. Yes, the hypocritical composure of his countenance, and his counterfeited pity for the poor woman, were intolerable!

Capt. While that amiable creature, his wife, implicitly believed every syllable he said—

Miss Wal. And felt nothing but pity for the accuser, instead of paying the least regard to the accusation. But pray, is it really under a pretence of getting the girl upon the stage, that Belville has taken away Mrs Tempest's niece from the people she boarded with?

Capt. It is : Belville, ever on the look-out for fresh objects, met her in those primitive regions of purity, the green-boxes ; where, discovering that she was passionately desirous of becoming an actress, he improved his acquaintance with her, in the fictitious character of an Irish manager, and she eloped last night, to be, as she imagines, the heroine of a Dublin theatre.

Miss Wal. So, then, as he has kept his real name artfully concealed, Mrs Tempest can at most but suspect him of Miss Leeson's seduction.

Capt. Of no more, and this only from the description of the people who saw him in company with her at the play : but I wish the affair may not have a serious conclusion ; for she has a brother, a very spirited young fellow, who is a counsel in the Tem-

ple, and who will certainly call Belville to an account the moment he hears of it.

Miss Wal. And what will become of the poor creature after he has deserted her?

Capt. You know that Belville is generous to profusion, and has a thousand good qualities to counterbalance this single fault of gallantry, which contaminates his character.

Miss Wal. You men! you men!—You are such wretches that there's no having a moment's satisfaction with you! and what's still more provoking, there's no having a moment's satisfaction without you!

Capt. Nay, don't think us all alike.

Miss Wal. I'll endeavour to deceive myself; for it is but a poor argument of your sincerity, to be the confidant of another's falsehood.

Capt. Nay, no more of this, my love; no people live happier than Belville and his wife; nor is there a man in England, notwithstanding all his levity, who considers his wife with a warmer degree of affection; if you have a friendship, therefore, for her, let her continue in an error so necessary to her repose, and give no hint whatever of his gallantries to any body.

Miss Wal. If I had no pleasure in obliging you, I have too much regard for Mrs Belville not to follow your advice; but you need not enjoin me so strongly on the subject, when you know I can keep a secret.

Capt. You are all goodness, and the prudence with which you have concealed our private engagements has eternally obliged me; had you trusted the secret even to Mrs Belville, it wou'dn't have been safe; she would have told her husband, and he is such a rattle-skull, that, notwithstanding all his regard for me, he wou'd have mentioned it in some moment of levity, and sent it in a course of circulation to my father.

Miss Wal. The peculiarity of your father's temper, joined to my want of fortune, made it necessary

for me to keep our engagements inviolably secret; there is no merit, therefore, either in my prudence, or in my labouring assiduously to cultivate the good opinion of the general, since both were so necessary to my own happiness: don't despise me for this acknowledgment.

Capt. Bewitching softness!—But your goodness, I flatter myself, will be speedily rewarded; you are now such a favourite with him, that he is eternally talking of you; and I really fancy he means to propose you to me himself; for last night, in a few minutes after he had declared you would make the best wife in the world, he seriously asked me if I had any aversion to matrimony?

Miss Wal. Why, that was a very great concession indeed, as he seldom stoops to consult any body's inclinations.

Capt. So it was, I assure you; for, in the army, being used to nothing but command and obedience, he removes the discipline of the parade into his family, and no more expects his orders shou'd be disputed, in matters of a domestic nature, than if they were delivered at the head of his regiment.

Miss Wal. And yet Mrs Tempest, who you say is as much a storm in her nature as her name, is disputing them eternally.

Enter MR and MRS BELVILLE.

Bel. Well, Miss Walsingham, hav'n't we had a pretty morning's visitor?

Miss Wal. Really, I think so; and I have been asking Captain Savage how long the lady has been disordered in her senses?

Bel. Why will they let the poor woman abroad without some body to take care of her?

Capt. O, she has her lucid intervals.

Miss Wal. I declare I shall be as angry with you as I am with Belville.

(Aside to the Captain.)

Mrs Bel. You can't think how sensibly she spoke at first.

Bel. I should have had no conception of her madness, if she hadn't brought so preposterous a charge against me.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Lady Rachel Mildew, madam, sends her compliments, and if you are not particularly engaged, will do herself the pleasure of waiting upon you.

Mrs Bel. Our compliments, and we shall be glad to see her ladyship. *(Exit Servant.)*

Bel. I wonder if Lady Rachel knows that Torrington came to town last night from Bath.

Mrs Bel. I hope he has found benefit by the waters, for he is one of the best creatures existing; he's a downright parson Adams in good nature and simplicity.

Miss Wal. Lady Rachel will be quite happy at his return, and it would be a laughable affair, if a match could be brought about between the old maid and the old bachelor.

Capt. Mr Torrington is too much taken up at Westminster-Hall, to think of paying his devoirs to the ladies, and too plain a speaker, I fancy, to be agreeable to Lady Rachel.

Bel. You mistake the matter widely; she is deeply smitten with him; but honest Torrington is utterly unconscious of his conquest, and modestly thinks that he has not a single attraction for any woman in the universe.

Mrs Bel. Yet my poor aunt speaks sufficiently plain, in all conscience, to give him a different opinion of himself.

Miss Wal. Yes, and puts her charms into such repair, whenever she expects to meet him, that her cheeks look for all the world like a rasherry ice upon a ground of custard.

Capt. I thought Apollo was the only god of Lady

Rachel's idolatry, and that, in her passion for poetry, she had taken leave of all the less elevated affections.

Bel. O, you mistake again; the poets are eternally in love, and can by no means be calculated to describe the imaginary passions, without being very susceptible of the real ones.

Enter Servant.

Ser. The man, madam, from Tavistock-street has brought home the dresses for the masquerade, and desires to know if there are any commands for him.

Mrs Bel. O, bid him stay till we see the dresses.

(Exit Servant.)

Miss Wal. They are only dominos.

Bel. I am glad of that; for characters are as difficult to be supported at the masquerade, as they are in real life. The last time I was at the Pantheon, a vestal virgin invited me to sup with her, and swore that her pocket had been pick'd by a justice of peace.

Miss Wal. Nay, that was not so bad, as the Hamlet's ghost that box'd with Henry the Eighth, and afterwards danced a hornpipe to the tune of Nancy Dawson. Ha! ha! ha!—We follow you, Mrs Belville.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

Changes to LEESON'S Chambers in the Temple.

Enter LEESON.

Lees. Where is this clerk of mine? Connolly!

Con. (Behind.) Here, sir!

Lees. Have you copied the marriage-settlement as I corrected it?

Con. (*Enters with pistols.*) Ay, honey, an hour ago.

Lees. What, you have been trying those pistols?

Con. By my soul I have been firing them this half hour, without once being able to make them go off.

Lees. They are plaguy dirty.

Con. In troth, so they are; I strove to brighten them up a little, but some misfortune attends every thing I do, for the more I clane them, the dirtier they are, honey.

Lees. You have had some of your usual daily visitors for money, I suppose.

Con. You may say that! and three or four of them are now hanging about the door, that I wish handsomely hanged any where else for bodering us.

Lees. No joking, Connolly! my present situation is a very disagreeable one.

Con. Faith, and so it is; but who makes it disagreeable? your aunt Tempest would let you have as much money as you please, but you won't condescend to be acquainted with her, though people in this country can be very intimate friends, without seeing one another's faces for seven years.

Lees. Do you think me base enough to receive a favour from a woman, who has disgraced her family, and stoops to be a kept mistress? You see, my sister is already ruined by a connection with her.

Con. Ah, sir, a good guinea isn't the worse for coming through a bad hand; if it was, what would become of us lawyers? and by my soul, many a high head in London would at this minute be very low, if they hadn't received favours even from much worse people than kept mistresses.

Lees. Others, Connolly, may prostitute their honour, as they please; mine is my chief possession, and I must take particular care of it.

Con. Honour, to be sure, it is a very fine thing, sir ; but I don't see how it is to be taken care of without a little money ; your honour, to my knowledge, hasn't been in your own possession these two years, and the devil a crum can you honestly swear by, till you get it out of the hands of your creditors.

Lees. I have given you a licence to talk, Connolly, because I know you faithful ; but I ha'n't given you a liberty to sport with my misfortunes.

Con. You know I'd die to serve you, sir ; but of what use is your giving me leave to spake, if you oblige me to hould my tongue ? 'tis out of pure love and affection that I put you in mind of your misfortunes.

Lees. Well, Connolly, a few days will, in all probability, enable me to redeem my honour, and to reward your fidelity ; the lovely Emily, you know, has half-consented to embrace the first opportunity of flying with me to Scotland, and the paltry trifles I owe will not be missed in her fortune.

Con. But, dear sir, consider you are going to fight a duel this very evening, and if you should be kilt, I fancy you will find it a little difficult to run away afterwards with the lovely Emily.

Lees. If I fall, there will be an end to my misfortunes.

Con. But surely it will not be quite genteel to go out of the world without paying your debts.

Lees. But how shall I stay in the world, Connolly, without punishing Belville for ruining my sister ?

Con. O, the devil fly away with this honour ! an ounce of common sense is worth a whole ship-load of it, if we must prefer a bullet or a halter to a fine young lady and a great fortune.

Lees. We'll talk no more on the subject at present. Take this letter to Mr Belville ; deliver it into his own hand, be sure ; and bring me an answer : make haste, for I shall not stir out till you come back.

Con. By my soul, I wish you may be able to stir out then—O, but that's true—

Lees. What's the matter?

Con. Why, sir, the gentleman I last lived clerk with died lately, and left me a legacy of twenty guineas—

Lees. What ! is Mr Stanley dead?

Con. Faith, his friends have behaved very unkindly if he is not, for they have buried him these six weeks.

Lees. And what then?

Con. Why, sir, I received my little legacy this morning, and if you'd be so good as to keep it for me, I'd be much obliged to you.

Lees. Connolly, I understand you, but I am already shamefully in your debt : you've had no money from me this age.

Con. O sir, that does not signify ; if you are not kilt in this damned duel, you'll be able enough to pay me : if you are, I sha'n't want it.

Lees. Why so, my poor fellow?

Con. Because, though I am but your clerk, and though I think fighting the most foolish thing upon earth, I'm as much a gentleman as yourself, and have as much right to commit a murder in the way of duelling.

Lees. And what then? You have no quarrel with Mr Belville?

Con. I shall have a damned quarrel with him though if you are kilt : your death shall be revenged, depend upon it, so let that content you.

Lees. My dear Connolly, I hope I sha'n't want such a proof of your affection.—How he distresses me!

Con. You will want a second, I suppose, in this affair : I stood second to my own brother in the Fifteen Acres, and though that has made me detest the very thought of duelling ever since, yet if you want a friend, I'll attend you to the field of death with a great deal of satisfaction.

Lees. I thank you, Connolly, but I think it ex-

tremely wrong in any man who has a quarrel, to expose his friend to difficulties ; we shou'dn't seek for redress, if we are not equal to the task of fighting our own battles ; and I choose you particularly to carry my letter, because you may be supposed ignorant of the contents, and thought to be acting only in the ordinary course of your business.

Con. Say no more about it, honey ; I will be back with you presently. (*Going, returns.*) I put the twenty guineas in your pocket, before you were up, sir ; and I don't believe you'd look for such a thing there, if I wasn't to tell you of it. (*Exit.*)

Lees. This faithful, noble-hearted creature !—but let me fly from thought ; the business I have to execute will not bear the test of reflection. (*Exit.*)

Re-enter CONNOLLY.

Con. As this is a challenge, I shou'dn't go without a sword ; come down, little tickle-pitcher. (*Takes a sword.*) Some people may think me very conceited now ; but as the dirtiest black-legs in town can wear one without being stared at, I don't think it can suffer any disgrace by the side of an honest man. (*Exit.*)

SCENE III.

An Apartment at BELVILLE'S.

Enter MRS BELVILLE.

Mrs Bel. How strangely this affair of Mrs Tempest hangs upon my spirits, though I have every reason, from the tenderness, the politeness, and the generosity of Mr Belville, as well as from the woman's be-

haviour, to believe the whole charge the result of a disturbed imagination, yet suppose it shou'd be actually true—heigho!—well, suppose it should;—I wou'd endeavour—I think I wou'd endeavour—to keep my temper:—a frowning face never recovered a heart that was not to be fixed with a smiling one:—but women in general forget this grand article of the matrimonial creed entirely; the dignity of insulted virtue obliges them to play the fool, whenever their Corydons play the libertine; and, poh! they must pull down the house about the traitor's ears, though they are themselves to be crushed in pieces by the ruins.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Lady Rachel Mildew, madam.

[Exit Servant,

Enter LADY RACHEL MILDEW.

Lady Rach. My dear, how have you done since the little eternity of my last seeing you? Mr Torrington is come to town, I hear.

Mrs Bel. He is, and must be greatly flattered to find that your ladyship has made him the hero of your new comedy.

Lady Rach. Yes, I have drawn him as he is, an honest practitioner of the law; which is, I fancy, no very common character.

Mrs Bel. And it must be a vast acquisition to the theatre.

Lady Rach. Yet the managers of both houses have refused my play; have refused it peremptorily, though I offered to make them a present of it.

Mrs Bel. That's very surprising, when you offered to make them a present of it.

Lady Rach. They alledge that the audiences are tired of crying at comedies; and insist that my de-

spairing shepherdess is absolutely too dismal for representation.

Mrs Bel. What, though you have introduced a lawyer in a new light?

Lady Rich. Yes, and have a boarding-school romp, that slaps her mother's face, and throws a bason of scalding water at her governess.

Mrs Bel. Why surely these are capital jokes!

Lady Rach. But the managers can't find them out.—However, I am determined to bring it out somewhere; and I have discovered such a treasure for my boarding-school romp, as exceeds the most sanguine expectation of criticism.

Mrs Bel. How fortunate!

Lady Rach. Going to Mrs Le Blond, my milliner's, this morning, to see some contraband silks, (for you know there's a foreign minister just arrived,) I heard a loud voice rehearsing Juliet from the dining-room; and upon inquiry, found that it was a country girl just eloped from her friends in town, to go upon the stage with an Irish manager.

Mrs Bel. Ten to one, the strange woman's niece, who has been here this morning. *(Aside.*

Lady Rach. Mrs Le Blond has some doubts about the manager, it seems, though she hasn't seen him yet, because the apartments are very expensive, and were taken by a fine gentleman out of livery.

Mrs Bel. What am I to think of this?—Pray, Lady Rachel, as you have conversed with this young actress, I suppose you could procure me a sight of her?

Lady Rach. This moment if you will; I am very intimate with her already; but pray keep the matter a secret from your husband, for he is so witty, you know, upon my passion for the drama, that I shall be teased to death by him.

Mrs Bel. O, you may be very sure that your secret is safe, for I have a most particular reason to

keep it from Mr Belville ; but he is coming this way with Captain Savage ; let us at present avoid him.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter BELVILLE and CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

Capt. You are a very strange man, Belville ; you are for ever tremblingly solicitous about the happiness of your wife, yet for ever endangering it by your passion for variety.

Bel. Why, there is certainly a contradiction between my principles and my practice ; but if ever you marry, you'll be able to reconcile it perfectly. Possession, Savage ! O, possession, is a miserable whetter of the appetite in love ! and I own myself so sad a fellow, that though I wou'dn't exchange Mrs Belville's mind for any woman's upon earth, there is scarcely a woman's person upon earth, which is not to me a stronger object of attraction.

Capt. Then, perhaps, in a little time you'll be weary of Miss Leeson.

Bel. To be sure I shall ; though, to own the truth, I have not yet carried my point conclusively with the little monkey.

Capt. Why, how the plague has she escaped a moment in your hands ?

Bel. By a mere accident.—She came to the lodgings, which my man Spruce prepared for her, rather unexpectedly last night, so that I happened to be engaged particularly in another quarter—you understand me ?—and the damned aunt found me so much employment all the morning, that I could only send a message by Spruce, promising to call upon her the first moment I had to spare in the course of the day.

Capt. And so you are previously satisfied that you shall be tired of her ?

Bel. Tired of her !—Why I am at this moment in pursuit of fresh game against the hour of satiety :—game that you know to be exquisite ; and I fancy I

shall bring it down, though it is closely guarded by a deal of that pride, which passes for virtue with the generality of your mighty good people.

Capt. Indeed ! and may a body know this wonder ?

Bel. You are to be trusted with any thing, for you are the closest fellow I ever knew, and the rack itself would hardly make you discover one of your own secrets to any body—what do you think of Miss Walsingham ?

Capt. Miss Walsingham !—Death and the devil !
(*Aside.*)

Bel. Miss Walsingham.

Capt. Why surely she has not received your addresses with any degree of approbation ?

Bel. With every degree of approbation I cou'd expect.

Capt. She has ?

Bel. Ay : why this news surprises you ?

Capt. It does indeed !

Bel. Ha, ha, ha : I can't help laughing to think what a happy dog Miss Walsingham's husband is likely to be !

Capt. A very happy dog, truly !

Bel. She's a delicious girl, isn't she, Savage ?—but she'll require a little more trouble ;—for a fine woman, like a fortified town, to speak in your father's language, demands a regular siege ; and we must even allow her the honours of war, to magnify the greatness of our own victory.

Capt. Well, it amazes me how you gay fellows ever have the presumption to attack a woman of principle ; Miss Walsingham has no apparent levity of any kind about her.

Bel. No ; but she continued in my house after I had whispered my passion in her ear, and gave me a second opportunity of addressing her improperly ; what greater encouragement cou'd I desire ?

Enter SPRUCE.

Well, Spruce, what are your commands?

Spruce. My lady is just gone out with Lady Rachel, sir.

Bel. I understand you.

Spruce. I believe you do. (*Aside.*) (*Exit.*

Capt. What is the English of these significant looks between Spruce and you?

Bel. Only that Miss Walsingham is left alone, and that I have now an opportunity of entertaining her. You must excuse me, Savage; you must upon my soul; but not a word of this affair to any body; because, when I shake her off my hands, there may be fools enough to think of her upon terms of honourable matrimony. (*Exit.*

Capt. So, here's a discovery! a precious discovery! and while I have been racking my imagination, and sacrificing my interest, to promote the happiness of this woman, she has been listening to the addresses of another; to the addresses of a married man! the husband of her friend, and the intimate friend of her intended husband!—By Belville's own account, however, she has not yet proceeded to any criminal lengths—But why did she keep the affair a secret from me? or why did she continue in his house after a repeated declaration of his unwarrantable attachment?—What's to be done?—If I open my engagement with her to Belville, I am sure he will instantly desist;—but then her honour is left in a state extremely questionable—It shall be still concealed—While it remains unknown, Belville will himself tell me every thing;—and doubt, upon an occasion of this nature, is infinitely more insupportable than the downright falsehood of the woman whom we love. (*Exit.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in GENERAL SAVAGE'S House.

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE and TORRINGTON.

Gen. Zounds ! Torrington, give me quarter, when I surrender up my sword : I own that for these twenty years I have been suffering all the inconveniences of marriage, without tasting any one of its comforts, and rejoicing in an imaginary freedom, while I was really grovelling in chains.

Tor. In the dirtiest chains upon earth ;—yet you wou'dn't be convinced, but laughed at all your married acquaintance as slaves, when not one of them put up with half so much from the worst wife, as you were obliged to crouch under from a kept mistress.

Gen. 'Tis too true. But, you know, she sacrificed much for me ;—you know that she was the widow of a colonel, and refused two very advantageous matches on my account.

Tor. If she was the widow of a judge, and had refused a high chancellor, she was still a devil incarnate, and you were in course a madman to live with her.

Gen. You don't remember her care of me when I have been sick.

Tor. I recollect, however, her usage of you in health, and you may easily find a tenderer nurse, when you are bound over by the gout or the rheumatism.

Gen. Well, well, I agree with you that she is a devil incarnate ; but I am this day determined to part with her for ever.

Tor. Not you indeed.

Gen. What, don't I know my own mind ?

Tor. Not you indeed, when she is in the question : with every body else, your resolution is as unalterable as a determination in the house of peers : but Mrs Tempest is your fate, and she reverses your decrees with as little difficulty as a fraudulent debtor now-a-days procures his certificate under a commission of bankruptcy.

Gen. Well, if, like the Roman Fabius, I conquer by delay, in the end there will be no great reason to find fault with my generalship. The proposal of parting now comes from herself.

Tor. O, you daren't make it for the life of you !

Gen. You must know that this morning we had a smart cannonading on Belville's account, and she threatens, as I told you before, to quit my house if I don't challenge him for taking away her niece.

Tor. That fellow is the very devil among the women, and yet there isn't a man in England fonder of his wife.

Gen. Poh ! if the young minx hadn't surrendered to him, she would have capitulated to somebody else, and I shall at this time be doubly obliged to him, if he is any ways instrumental in getting the aunt off my hands.

Tor. Why at this time ?

Gen. Because, to shew you how fixed my resolu-

tion is to be a keeper no longer, I mean to marry immediately.

Tor. And can't you avoid being pressed to death, like a felon who refuses to plead, without incurring a sentence of perpetual imprisonment?

Gen. I fancy you would yourself have no objection to a perpetual imprisonment in the arms of Miss Walsingham.

Tor. But have you any reason to think that, upon examination in a case of love, she would give a favourable reply to your interrogatories?

Gen. The greatest—do you think I'd hazard such an engagement without being perfectly sure of my ground? Notwithstanding my present connection won't suffer me to see a modest woman at my own house, she always treats me with particular attention whenever I visit at Belville's; or meet her any where else—If fifty young fellows are present, she directs all her assiduities to the old soldier, and my son has a thousand times told me that she professes the highest opinion of my understanding.

Tor. And truly you give a notable proof of your understanding, in thinking of a woman almost young enough to be your grand-daughter.

Gen. Nothing like an experienced chief to command in any garrison.

Tor. Recollect the state of your present citadel.

Gen. Well, if I am blown up by my own mine, I shall be the only sufferer—There's another thing I want to talk of—I am going to marry my son to Miss Moreland.

Tor. Miss Moreland!—

Gen. Belville's sister.

Tor. O, ay, I remember that Moreland had got a good estate to assume the name of Belville.

Gen. I haven't yet mentioned the matter to my son, but I settled the affair with the girl's mother

yesterday, and she only waits to communicate it to Belville, who is her oracle, you know.

Tor. And are you sure the captain will like her?

Gen. I am not so unreasonable as to insist upon his liking her, I shall only insist upon his marrying her.

Tor. What, whether he likes her or not?

Gen. When I issue my orders, I expect them to be obeyed; and don't look for an examination into their propriety.

Tor. What a delightful thing it must be to live under a military government, where a man is not to be troubled with the exercise of his understanding!

Gen. Miss Moreland has thirty thousand pounds—That's a large sum of ammunition money.

Tor. Ay, but a marriage merely on the score of fortune, is only gilding the death-warrant sent down for the execution of a prisoner. However, as I know your obstinate attachment to what you once resolve, I sha'n't pretend to argue with you; where are the papers which you want me to consider?

Gen. They are in my library—File off with me to the next room, and they shall be laid before you—But first I'll order the chariot; for the moment I have your opinion, I purpose to sit down regularly before Miss Walsingham—Who waits there?

Enter a Servant.

Gen. Is Mrs Tempest at home?

Serv. Yes, sir, just come in, and just going out again.

Gen. Very well; order the chariot to be got ready.

Serv. Sir, one of the pannels was broke last night at the Opera-house.

Gen. Sir, I didn't call to have the pleasure of your conversation, but to have obedience paid to my orders.

Tor. Go order the chariot, you blockhead.

Serv. With the broken pannel, sir?

Gen. Yes, you rascal, if both pannels were broke, and the back shattered to pieces.

Serv. The coachman thinks that one of the wheels is damaged, sir.

Gen. Don't attempt to reason, you dog, but execute your orders.—Bring the chariot without the wheels—if you can't bring it with them.

Tor. Ay, bring it, if you reduce it to a sledge, and let your master look like a malefactor for high treason, on his journey to Tyburn.

Enter MRS TEMPEST.

Mrs Tem. General Savage, is the house to be for ever a scene of noise with your domineering?—The chariot sha'n't be brought—it won't be fit for use till it is repaired—and John shall drive it this very minute to the coach-maker's.

Gen. Nay, my dear, if it isn't fit for use, that's another thing.

Tor. Here's the experienced chief that's fit to command in any garrison! *(Aside.*

Gen. Go, order me the coach then. *(To the Serv.*

Mrs Tem. You can't have the coach.

Gen. And why so, my love?

Mrs Tem. Because I want it for myself.—Robert, get a hack for your master—though indeed I don't see what business he has out of the house.

(Exeunt MRS TEMPEST and ROBERT.

Tor. When you issue your orders, you expect them to be obeyed, and don't look for an examination into their propriety.

Gen. The fury!—this has steeled me against her for ever, and nothing on earth can now prevent me from drumming her out immediately.

Mrs Tem. *(Behind.)* An unreasonable old fool—But I'll make him know who governs this house!

Gen. Zounds! here she comes again; she has been

lying in ambuscade, I suppose, and has overheard us.

Tor. What if she has? you are steeled against her for ever.

Gen. No, she's not coming—she's going down stairs;—and now, dear Torrington, you must be as silent as a sentinel on an out-post about this affair. If that virago was to hear a syllable of it, she might perhaps attack Miss Walsingham in her very camp, and defeat my whole plan of operations.

Tor. I thought you were determined to drum her out immediately. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II.

BELVILLE'S Apartment.

Enter MISS WALSHINGHAM, *followed by* BELVILLE.

Miss Wal. I beg, sir, that you will insult me no longer with solicitations of this nature—give me proofs of your sincerity indeed! What proofs of sincerity can your situation admit of, if I could be even weak enough to think of you with partiality at all?

Bel. If our affections, madam, were under the government of our reason, circumstanced as I am, this unhappy bosom wouldn't be torn by passion for Miss Walsingham.—Had I been blessed with your acquaintance before I saw Mrs Belville, my hand as well as my heart wou'd have been humbly offered to your acceptance—fate, however, has ordered it otherwise, and it is cruel to reproach me with that situation as a crime, which ought to be pitied as my greatest misfortune.

Miss Wal. He's actually forcing tears into his eyes.—However, I'll mortify him severely. (*Aside.*

Bel. But such proofs of sincerity as my situation can admit of, you shall yourself command, as my only business in existence is to adore you.

Miss Wal. His only business in existence to adore me! (*Aside.*

Bel. Prostrate at your feet, my dearest Miss Walsingham, (*Kneeling.*) behold a heart eternally devoted to your service.—You have too much good sense, madam, to be the slave of custom, and too much humanity not to pity the wretchedness you have caused. Only, therefore, say that you commiserate my sufferings—I'll ask no more—and surely that may be said, without any injury to your purity, to snatch even an enemy from distraction—Where's my handkerchief? (*Aside.*

Miss Wal. Now to answer in his own way, and to make him ridiculous to himself—(*Aside.*) If I thought, if I could think, (*Affecting to weep.*) that these protestations were real—

Bel. How can you, madam, be so unjust to your own merit? how can you be so cruelly doubtful of my solemn asseverations?—Here I again kneel, and swear eternal love!

Miss Wal. I don't know what to say—but there is one proof—(*Affecting to weep.*)

Bel. Name it, my angel, this moment, and make me the happiest of mankind!

Miss Wal. Swear to be mine for ever.

Bel. I have sworn it a thousand times, my charmer; and I will swear it to the last moment of my life.

Miss Wal. Why then—but don't look at me I beseech you—I don't know how to speak it.

Bel. The delicious emotion!—do not check the generous tide of tenderness that fills me with such extasy.

Miss Wal. You'll despise me for this weakness?

Bel. This weakness!—this generosity, which will demand my everlasting gratitude.

Miss Wal. I am a fool—but there is a kind of fatality in this affair—and I do consent to go off with you.

Bel. Eternal blessings on your condescension!

Miss Wal. You are irresistible, and I am ready to fly with you to any part of the world.

Bel. Fly to any part of the world indeed!—you shall fly by yourself then! (*Aside.*) You are the most lovely, the most tender creature in the world, and thus again let me thank you: O, Miss Walsingham, I cannot express how happy you've made me!—But where's the necessity of our leaving England?

Miss Wal. I thought he wou'dn't like to go abroad—(*Aside.*) That I may possess the pleasure of your company unrivalled.

Bel. I must cure her of this taste for travelling.

(*Aside.*)

Miss Wal. You don't answer, Mr Belville?

Bel. Why I was turning the consequence of your proposal in my thoughts, as going off—going off—you know—

Miss Wal. Why going off, you know, is going off—And what objections can you have to going off?

Bel. Why going off will subject you, at a certainty, to the slander of the world; whereas, by staying at home, we may not only have numberless opportunities of meeting, but at the same time prevent suspicion itself from ever breathing on your reputation.

Miss Wal. I didn't dream of your starting any difficulties, sir.—Just now I was dearer to you than all the world.

Bel. And so you are, by heaven!

Miss Wal. Why won't you sacrifice the world then at once to obtain me?

Bel. Surely, my dearest life, you must know the

necessity, which every man of honour is under, of keeping up his character?

Miss Wal. So, here's this fellow swearing to ten thousand lies, and yet talking very gravely about his honour and his character. (*Aside.*) Why, to be sure, in these days, Mr Belville, the instances of conjugal infidelity are so very scarce, and men of fashion are so remarkable for a tender attachment to their wives, that I don't wonder at your circumspection—But do you think I can stoop to accept you by halves, or admit of any partnership in your heart?

Bel. O you must do more than that, if you have any thing to say to me. (*Aside.*) Surely, madam, when you know my whole soul unalterably your own, you will permit me to preserve those appearances with the world, which are indispensably requisite—Mrs Belville is a most excellent woman, however it may be my fortune to be devoted to another—Her happiness, besides, constitutes a principal part of my felicity, and if I was publicly to forsake her, I should be hunted as a monster from society.

Miss Wal. Then, I suppose it is by way of promoting Mrs Belville's repose, sir, that you make love to other women; and by way of shewing the nicety of your honour, that you attempt the purity of such as your own roof peculiarly entitles to protection? For the honour intended to me, thus low to the ground I thank you, Mr Belville.

Bel. Laughed at, by all the stings of mortification!

Miss Wal. Good bye.—Don't let this accident mortify your vanity too much;—but take care, the next time you vow everlasting love, that the object is neither tender enough to sob—sob—at your distress, nor provoking enough to make a proposal of leaving England.—How greatly a little common sense can lower these fellows of extraordinary impudence!

(*Exit.*)

Bel. (*Alone.*) So then, I am fairly taken in, and she has been only diverting herself with me all this time :—however, lady fair, I may chance to have the laugh in a little time on my side ; for if you can sport in this manner about the flame, I think it must in the run lay hold of your wings.—What shall I do in this affair ?—she sees the matter in its true light, and there's no good to be expected from thumping of bosoms, or squeezing white handkerchiefs ;—no, these won't do with women of sense, and in a short time they'll be ridiculous to the very babies of a boarding-school.

Enter CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

Capt. Well, Belville, what news ? You have had a fresh opportunity with Miss Walsingham.

Bel. Why, faith, Savage, I've had a most extraordinary scene with her, and yet have but little reason to brag of my good fortune, though she offered in express terms to run away with me.

Capt. Pr'ythee explain yourself, man ; she cou'dn't surely be so shameless !

Bel. O, her offering to run away with me was by no means the worst part of the affair.

Capt. No ? then it must be damn'd bad indeed : but, pr'ythee, hurry to an explanation.

Bel. Why then, the worst part of the affair is, that she was laughing at me the whole time ; and made this proposal of an elopement with no other view, than to shew me in strong colours to myself, as a very dirty fellow to the best wife in England.

Capt. I am easy.

(*Aside.*

Enter SPRUCE.

Spruce. Sir, there is an Irish gentleman below with a letter for you, who will deliver it to nobody but yourself.

Bel. Shew him up then.

Spruce. Yes, sir.

Capt. It may be on business, Belville; I'll take my leave of you.

Bel. O, by no means; I can have no business which I desire to keep from you, though you are the arrantest miser of your confidence upon earth, and wou'd rather trust your life in any body's hands, than even a paltry amour with the apprentice of a milliner.

Enter CONNOLLY.

Con. Gintlemin, your most obedient; pray, which of you is Mr Belville?

Bel. My name is Belville, at your service, sir.

Con. I have a little bit of a letter for you, sir.

Bel. (*Reads.*)

"SIR—The people where Miss Leeson lately lodged asserting positively that you have taken her away in a fictitious character, the brother of that unhappy girl thinks himself obliged to demand satisfaction for the injury you have done his family; though a stranger to your person, he is sufficiently acquainted with your reputation for spirit, and shall, therefore, make no doubt of seeing you with a case of pistols, near the ring in Hyde Park, at eight o'clock this evening, to answer the claims of

GEORGE LEESON.

"To CRAGGS BELVILLE, Esq."

Capt. Eight o'clock in the evening! 'tis a strange time!

Con. Why so, honey? A fine evening is as good a time for a bad action as a fine morning; and if a man of sense can be such a fool to fight a duel, he shou'd never sleep upon the matter, for the more he thinks of it, the more he must feel himself ashamed of his resolution.

Bel. A pretty letter!

Con. O yes, an invitation to a brace of bullets is a very pretty thing.

Bel. For a challenge, however, 'tis very civilly written!

Con. Faith, if it was written to me, I shou'dn't be very fond of such civility: I wonder he doesn't sign himself, your most obedient servant.

Capt. I told you Leeson's character, and what wou'd become of this damned business; but your affairs—are they settled, Belville?

Bel. O, they are always settled; for, as this is a country where people occasionally die, I take constant care to be prepared for contingencies.

Con. Occasionally die!—I'll be very much obliged to you, sir, if you tell me the country where people do not die; for I'll immediately go and end my days there.

Bel. Ha! ha! ha!

Con. Faith, you may laugh, gintlemin, but though I am a foolish Irishman, and come about a foolish piece of business, I'd prefer a snug birth in this world, bad as it is, to the finest coffin in all Christendom.

Bel. I am surprised, sir, that, thinking in this manner, you would be the bearer of a challenge.

Con. And well you may, sir; but we must often take a pleasure in serving our friends, by doing things that are very disagreeable to us.

Capt. Then you think Mr Leeson much to blame, perhaps, for hazarding his life where he can by no means repair the honour of his sister.

Con. Indeed and I do—But I shall think this gintlemin, begging his pardon, much more to blame for meeting him.

Bel. And why so, sir?—You wou'dn't have me disappoint your friend?

Con. Faith, and that I wou'd—He, poor lad, may have some reason at present to be tired of the world,

but you have a fine estate, a fine wife, a fine parcel of children—in short, honey, you have every thing to make you fond of living, and, the devil burn me, was I in your case, if I'd stake my own happiness against the misery of any man.

Bel. I am very much obliged to your advice, sir, though on the present occasion I cannot adopt it; be so good as to present my compliments to your friend, and tell him I shall certainly do myself the honour of attending his appointment.

Con. Why then upon my soul I am very sorry for it.

Capt. 'Tis not very customary, sir, with gentlemen of Ireland to oppose an affair of honour.

Con. They are like the gintlemin of England, sir, they are brave to a fault; yet I hope to see the day that it will be infamous to draw the swords of either against any body but the enemies of the country.

(*Exit.*

Bel. I am quite charmed with this honest Hibernian, and would almost fight a duel for the pleasure of his acquaintance.

Capt. Come, step with me a little, and let us consider, whether there may not be some method of accommodating this cursed business.

Bel. Poh! don't be uneasy upon my account; my character, with regard to affairs of this nature is unhappily too well established, and you may be sure that I sha'n't fight with Leeson.

Capt. No—you have injured him greatly?

Bel. The very reason of all others why I should not cut his throat.

(*Exeunt.*

Enter SPRUCE.

Spruce. What the devil, this master of mine has got a duel upon his hands! Zounds! I am sorry for that; he is a prince of a fellow, and a good subject

must always love his prince, though he may now and then be a little out of humour with his actions.

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE.

Gen. Your hall-door standing open, Spruce, and none of your sentinels being on guard, I have surprised your camp thus far without resistance : Where is your master ?

Spruce. Just gone out with Captain Savage, sir.

Gen. Is your lady at home ?

Spruce. No, sir, but Miss Walsingham is at home ; shall I inform her of your visit ?

Gen. There is no occasion to inform her of it, for here she is, Spruce. *(Exit SPRUCE.)*

Enter MISS WALSINGHAM.

Miss Wal. General Savage, your most humble servant.

Gen. My dear Miss Walsingham, it is rather cruel that you should be left at home by yourself, and yet I am greatly rejoiced to find you at present without company.

Miss Wal. I can't but think myself in the best company, when I have the honour of your conversation, general.

Gen. You flatter me too much, madam, yet I am come to talk to you on a serious affair, Miss Walsingham ; an affair of importance to me and to yourself : Have you leisure to favour me with a short audience, if I beat a parley ?

Miss Wal. Any thing of importance to you, sir, is always sufficient to command my leisure.—'Tis as the captain suspected. *(Aside.)*

Gen. You tremble, my lovely girl, but don't be alarmed ; for though my business is of an important nature, I hope it won't be of a disagreeable one.

Miss Wal. And yet I am greatly agitated.

(Aside.)

Gen. Soldiers, Miss Walsingham, are said to be generally favoured by the kind partiality of the ladies.

Miss Wal. The ladies are not without gratitude, sir, to those who devote their lives peculiarly to the service of their country.

Gen. Generously said, madam. Then give me leave, without any masked battery, to ask, if the heart of an honest soldier is a prize at all worth your acceptance?

Miss Wal. Upon my word, sir, there's no masked battery in this question.

Gen. I am as fond of a coup de main, madam, in love as in war, and hate the tedious method of sapping a town, when there is a possibility of entering sword in hand.

Miss Wal. Why, really, sir, a woman may as well know her own mind, when she is summoned by the trumpet of a lover, as when she undergoes all the tiresome formality of a siege. You see I have caught your own mode of conversing, general.

Gen. And a very great compliment I consider it, madam: But now that you have candidly confessed an acquaintance with your own mind, answer me with that frankness for which every body admires you so much—Have you any objection to change the name of Walsingham?

Miss Wal. Why then, frankly, General Savage, I say no.

Gen. Ten thousand thanks to you for this kind declaration!

Miss Wal. I hope you won't think it a forward one.

Gen. I'd sooner see my son run away in the day of battle;—I'd soon think Lord Russel was bribed by Lewis the XIVth, and sooner vilify the memory of Algernon Sidney.

Miss Wal. How unjust it was ever to suppose the general a tyrannical father! (*Aside.*)

Gen. You have told me condescendingly, Miss

Walsingham, that you have no objection to change your name—I have but one question more to ask.

Miss Wal. Pray propose it.

Gen. Would the name of Savage be disagreeable to you?—Speak frankly again, my dear girl!

Miss Wal. Why then again I frankly say, no.

Gen. You make me too happy; and though I shall readily own, that a proposal of this nature would come with more propriety from my son——

Miss Wal. I am much better pleased that you make the proposal yourself, sir.

Gen. You are too good to me.—Torrington thought that I should meet with a repulse! (*Aside.*

Miss Wal. Have you communicated this business to the captain, sir?

Gen. No, my dear madam, I did not think that at all necessary. I have always been attentive to the captain's happiness, and I propose that he shall be married in a few days.

Miss Wal. What, whether I will or no?

Gen. O, you can have no objection.

Miss Wal. I must be consulted, however; about the day, general: but nothing in my power shall be wanting to make him happy.

Gen. Obliging loveliness!

Miss Wal. You may imagine, that if I was not previously imprest in favour of your proposal, it wou'd not have met my concurrence so readily.

Gen. Then you own that I had a previous friend in the garrison?

Miss Wal. I don't blush to acknowledge it, when I consider the accomplishments of the object, sir.

Gen. O this is too much, madam; the principal merit of the object is his passion for Miss Walsingham.

Miss Wal. Don't say that, general, I beg of you, for I don't think there are many women in the kingdom who could behold him with indifference.

Gen. Ah, you flattering, flattering angel!—and

yet, by the memory of Marlborough, my lovely girl, it was the idea of a prepossession on your part which encouraged me to hope for a favourable reception.

Miss Wal. Then I must have been very indiscreet, for I laboured to conceal that prepossession as much as possible.

Gen. You cou'dn't conceal it from me ! you cou'dn't conceal it from me !—The female heart is a field which I am thoroughly acquainted with, and which has more than once been a witness to my victories, madam.

Miss Wal. I don't at all doubt your success with the ladies, general ; but as we now understand one another so perfectly, you will give me leave to retire.

Gen. One word, my dear creature, and no more : I shall wait upon you some time to-day, with Mr Torrington, about the necessary settlements.

Miss Wal. You must do as you please, general ; you are invincible in every thing.

Gen. And, if you please, we'll keep every thing a profound secret till the articles are all settled, and the definitive treaty ready for execution.

Miss Wal. You may be sure that delicacy will not suffer me to be communicative on the subject, sir.

Gen. Then you leave every thing to my management ?

Miss Wal. I can't trust a more noble negotiator.

(*Exit.*

Gen. The day's my own.

(*Sings.*

Britons, strike home ! strike home ! Revenge, &c.

(*Exit singing.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

MISS LEESON'S *Lodgings*.

Enter LADY RACHEL MILDEW, MRS BELVILLE, and
MISS LEESON.

Lady Rach. Well, Mrs Belville, I am extremely glad you agree with me, in opinion of this young lady's qualifications for the stage. Don't you think she'd play Miss Headstrong admirably in my comedy?

Miss Bel. Yes, indeed, I think she possesses a natural fund of spirit very much adapted to the character.—'Tis impossible, surely, that this hoyden can have a moment's attraction for Mr Belville! (*Aside.*

Miss Lees. You are very obliging, ladies; but I have no turn for comedy; my forte is tragedy entirely.

Alphonso!—O Alphonso! to thee I call, &c.

Lady Rach. But, my dear, is there none of our comedies to your taste?

Miss Lees. O, yes; some of the sentimental ones

are very pretty, there's such little difference between them and tragedies.

Lady Rach. And pray, my dear, how long have you been engaged to Mr Frankly?

Miss Lees. I only came away last night, and hav'n't seen Mr Frankly since, though I expect him every moment.

Mrs Bel. Last night! just as Mrs Tempest mentioned. (*Aside.*)

Lady Rach. You had the concurrence of your friends?

Miss Lees. Not I, madam; Mr Frankly said I had too much genius to mind my friends, and as I should want nothing from them, there was no occasion to consult them in the affair.

Lady Rach. Then Osbaldiston is not your real name perhaps?

Miss Lees. O no, nor do I tell my real name; I chose Osbaldiston, because it was a long one, and wou'd make a striking appearance in the bills.

Mrs Bel. I wish we cou'd see Mr Frankly.

Miss Lees. Perhaps you may, madam, for he designs to give me a lesson every day, till we are ready to set off for Ireland.

Lady Rach. Suppose then, my dear, you wou'd oblige us with a scene in Juliet, by way of shewing your proficiency to Mrs Belville.

Miss Lees. Will you stand up for Romeo?

Lady Rach. With all my heart, and I'll give you some instructions.

Miss Lees. I beg pardon, ma'am; I'll learn to act under nobody but Mr Frankly. This room is without a carpet; if you will step into the next, ladies, I'll endeavour to oblige you.

Shall I not be environ'd, distraught—
This way, ladies.

Lady Rach. Pray, madam, shew us the way.

(*Exeunt MISS LEES. and LADY RACH.*)

Mrs Bel. I'll prolong this mummery as much as possible, in hopes the manager may come. Lie still, poor fluttering heart! it cannot be the lord of all your wishes! it cannot surely be your adored Belville?
(*Exit.*)

Re-enter MISS LEESON.

Miss Lees. Hav'n't I left my Romeo and Juliet here? O yes, there it is.

Enter BELVILLE.

Bel. ————O, were those eyes in heav'n,
They'd through the starry region shine so bright,
That birds would sing, and think it was the morn!

Miss Lees. Ah, my dear Mr Frankly! I'm so glad you are come! I was dying to see you.

Bel. Kiss me, my dear;—why didn't you send me word of your intention to come away last night?

Miss Lees. I hadn't time: but as I knew where the lodgings were, I thought I should be able to find you by a note to the coffee-house I always directed to.

Bel. Kiss me again, my little sparkler!

Miss Lees. Nay, I won't be kissed in this manner; for though I am going on she stage, I intend to have some regard for my character. But, ha! ha! ha! I am glad you are come now: I have company above stairs.

Bel. Company! that's unlucky at this time, for I wanted to make you entirely easy about your character. (*Aside.*) And pray, my dear, who is your company? You know we must be very cautious, for fear of your relations.

Miss Lees. O, they are only ladies.—But one of them is the most beautiful creature in the world!

Bel. The devil she is!

Miss Lees. "An earth-treading star, and makes dim heaven's light."

Bel. Zounds! I'll take a peep at the star—who knows but I may have an opportunity of making another actress. (*Aside.*

Miss Lees. Come, charmer! charmer!

Bel.—————Wer't thou as far,
As that vast shore, washed by the farthest sea,
I wou'd adventure for such merchandise.

Now let's see what fortune has sent us above stairs.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Dining Room at MISS LEESON'S.

MRS BELVILLE and LADY RACHEL *discovered.*

Mrs Bel. This is a most ignorant young creature, Lady Rachel.

Lady Rach. Why I think she is—Did you observe how she slighted my offer of instructing her?

Enter MISS LEESON.

Miss Lees. Ladies!—ladies!—here he is! here is Mr Frankly!

Enter BELVILLE, bowing very low, and not seeing the ladies.

Bel. Ladies, your most obedient.

Mrs Bel. Let me, if possible, recollect myself—
Sir, your most obedient humble servant.

Bel. Zounds! let me out of the house.

Lady Rach. What do I see?

Miss Lees. You seem, ladies, to know this gentleman?

Mrs Bel. (*Taking hold of him.*) You sha'n't go, renegade—You laughed at my credulity this morning, and I must now laugh at your embarrassment.

Bel. What a kind thing it would be in any body to blow out my stupid brains!

Lady Rach. I'll mark this down for an incident in my comedy.

Miss Lees. What do you hang your head for, Mr Frankly?

Bel. Be so good as to ask that lady, my dear.—The devil has been long in my debt, and now he pays me home with a witness.

Mrs Bel. What a cruel thing it is to let Mrs Tempest out, my love, without somebody to take care of her!

Miss Lees. What, do you know Mrs Tempest, madam?

Mrs Bel. Yes, my dear;—and I am pretty well acquainted with this gentleman.

Miss Lees. What, isn't this gentleman the manager of a play-house in Ireland?

Bel. The curtain is already dropt, my dear; the farce is nearly over, and you'll be speedily acquainted with the catastrophe.

Enter MRS TEMPEST.

Mrs Tem. Yes, sir, the curtain is almost dropt: I have had spies to watch your haunts, and the catastrophe ends in your detection—Come, you abandoned slut.—

Miss Lees. And have I eloped after all, without being brought upon the stage?

Mrs Tem. I don't know that you would be brought upon the stage; but I am sure you were near being

brought upon the town. I hope, madam, for the future, you'll not set me down a mad-woman.

(To MRS BEL.

Mrs Bel. Mr Belville, you'll make my apologies to this lady, and acknowledge that I think her perfectly in her senses.

Bel. I wish that I had entirely lost mine.

Lady Rach. (Writing.) "I wish that I had entirely lost mine,"—a very natural wish in such a situation.

Mrs Tem. Come, you audacious minx, come away. You shall be sent into Yorkshire this very evening; and see what your poor mother will say to you, hussey.

Miss Lees. I will go on the stage, if I die for't; and 'tis some comfort there's a play-house at York.

[*Exeunt* MRS TEMPEST and MISS LEESON.]

Bel. Nancy, I am so ashamed, so humbled, and so penitent, that if you knew what passes here, I am sure you wou'd forgive me.

Mrs Bel. My love, though I cannot say I rejoice in your infidelity, yet, believe me, I pity your distress: let us therefore think no more of this.

Lady Rach. (Writing.) "And think no more of this."—This conduct is new in a wife, and very dramatic.

Bel. Where, my angel, have you acquired so many requisites to charm with?

Mrs Bel. In your society, my dear; and believe me, that a wife may be as true a friend as any bottle-companion upon earth, though she can neither get merry with you over night, nor blow out your brains about some foolish quarrel in the morning.

Bel. If wives knew the omnipotence of virtue, where she wears a smile upon her face, they'd all follow your bewitching example, and make a faithless husband quite an incredible character.

Lady Rach. "Quite an incredible character!"—Let me set down that. (*Writing.*)

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

GENERAL SAVAGE'S.

Enter General and Captain.

Gen. Yes, Horace, I have been just visiting at Belville's.

Capt. You found nobody at home but Miss Walsingham?

Gen. No, but I'd a long conversation with her, and upon a very interesting subject.

Capt. 'Tis as I guessed. *(Aside.*

Gen. She is a most amiable creature, Horace.

Capt. So she is, sir, and will make any man happy that marries her.

Gen. I am glad you think so.

Capt. He's glad I think so!—'tis plain,—but I must leave every thing to himself, and seem wholly passive in the affair. *(Aside.*

Gen. A married life after all, Horace, I am now convinced, is the most happy as well as the most reputable.

Capt. It is indeed, sir.

Gen. Then, perhaps, you wou'd have no objection to be married, if I offered you as agreeable a young woman as Miss Walsingham?

Capt. 'Twould be my first pride on every occasion, sir, to pay an implicit obedience to your commands.

Gen. That's sensibly said, Horace, and obligingly said; prepare yourself therefore for an introduction to the lady in the morning.

Capt. Is the lady prepared to receive me, sir?

Gen. O yes: and you can't think how highly delighted Miss Walsingham appeared, when I acquainted her with my resolution on the subject.

Capt. She's all goodness!

Gen. The more I know her, the more I am charm'd with her. I must not be explicit with him yet, for fear my secret should get wind, and reach the ears of the enemy. (*Aside.*) I propose, Horace, that you should be married immediately.

Capt. The sooner the better, sir, I have no will but your's.

Gen. (*Shaking hands with him.*) By the memory of Marlbro', you are a most excellent boy!—But what do you think? Miss Walsingham insists upon naming the day.

Capt. And welcome, sir; I am sure she won't make it a distant one.

Gen. O, she said, that nothing in her power shou'd be wanting to make you happy.

Capt. I am sure of that, sir.

Gen. (*A loud knocking.*) Zounds, Horace! here's the disgrace and punishment of my life! let's avoid her as we would a fever in the camp.

Capt. Come to the library, and I'll tell you how whimsically she was treated this morning at Belville's.

Gen. Death and the devil! make haste. O, I must laugh at marriage, and be curst to me! But I am providing, Horace, against your falling into my error.

Capt. I am eternally indebted to you, sir.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

BELVILLE'S House.

Enter MRS BELVILLE and LADY RACHEL.

Lady Rach. Nay, Mrs Belville, I have no patience, you act quite unnaturally.

Mrs Bel. What! because I am unwilling to be miserable?

Lady Rach. This new instance of Mr Belville's infidelity—this attempt to seduce Miss Walsingham, which your woman overheard, is unpardonable!

Mrs Bel. I don't say but that I am strongly wounded by his irregularities; yet, if Mr Belville is unhappily a rover, I would much rather that he should have twenty mistresses than one.

Lady Rach. You astonish me!

Mrs Bel. Why, don't you know, my dear madam, that while he is divided amidst a variety of objects, 'tis impossible for him to have a serious attachment?

Lady Rach. Lord, Mrs Belville, how can you speak with so much composure! a virtuous woman should be always outrageous upon such an occasion as this.

Mrs Bel. What, and weary the innocent sun and moon from the firmament, like a despairing princess in a tragedy—No—no—Lady Rachel, 'tis bad enough to be indifferent to the man I love, without studying to excite his aversion.

Lady Rach. How glad I am that Miss Walsingham made him so heartily ashamed of himself! Lord,

these young men are so full of levity ! Give me a husband of Mr Torrington's age, say I.

Mrs Bel. And give me a husband of Mr Belville's, say I, with all his follies : However, Lady Rachel, I am pretty well satisfied that my conduct at Miss Leeson's will have a proper effect upon Mr Belville's generosity, and put an entire end to his gallantries for the future.

Lady Rach. Don't deceive yourself, my dear.—The gods in the shilling gallery would sooner give up roast beef, or go without an epilogue on the first night of a new piece.

Mrs Bel. Why should you think so of such a man as Mr Belville ?

Lady Rach. Because Mr Belville is a man : However, if you dare run the risque, we will try the sincerity of his reformation

Mrs Bel. If I dare run the risque ! I would stake my soul upon his honour.

Lady Rach. Then your poor soul would be in a very terrible situation.

Mrs Bel. By what test can we prove his sincerity ?

Lady Rach. By a very simple one. You know I write so like Miss Walsingham, that our hands are scarcely known asunder.

Mrs Bel. Well——

Lady Rach. Why then let me write to him as from her.

Mrs Bel. If I did not think it would look like a doubt of his honour——

Lady Rach. Poh ! dare you proceed upon my plan ?

Mrs Bel. Most confidently : Come to my dressing-room, where you'll find every thing ready for writing, and then you may explain your scheme more particularly.

Lady Rach. I'll attend you, but I am really sorry, my dear, for the love of propriety, to see you so

calm under the perfidy of your husband ; you should be quite wretched—indeed you should. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

The Temple.

Enter LEESON.

The hell-hounds are after me, and if I am arrested at this time, my honour will not only be blown upon by Belville, but I shall perhaps lose Emily into the bargain. (*Exit.*

Enter LEECH, CROW, and WOLF, dressed in fur habits.

Leech. Yonder, my lads, he darts through the cloisters ; who the devil cou'd think that he wou'd smoke us in this disguise ? Crow, do you take the Fleet-Street side of the Temple as fast as you can, to prevent his doubling us that way—and, Wolf, do you run round the Garden Court, that he mayn't escape us by the Thames—I'll follow the strait line myself, and the devil's in the dice if he is not snapped by one of us. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

Another part of the Temple.

Enter LEESON on one side, CONNOLLY on the other.

Lees. Fly, open the chambers this moment—the bailiffs are after me!

Con. Faith and that I will—but it will be of no use to fly a step neither, if I hav'n't the key.

Lees. Zounds! didn't you lock the door?

Con. Yes, but I believe I left the key on the inside—however your own key will do the business as well.

Lees. True, and I forgot it in my confusion; do you stay here, and throw every impediment in the way of these rascals.

Con. Faith and that I will. [*Exit* LEES.]

Enter CROW and WOLF.

Crow. Pray, sir, did you see a gentleman run this way drest in green and gold?

Con. In troth I did.

Wolf. And which way did he run?

Con. That I can tell you too.

Wolf. We shall be much obliged to you.

Con. Indeed and you will not, Mr Catchpole, for the devil an information shall you get from Connolly; I see plainly enough what you are, you blackguards, though there's no guessing at you in these fur coats.

Crow. Keep your information to yourself and be damn'd; here the cull comes, a prisoner in the custody of Master Leech.

Enter LEESON and LEECH.

Lees. Well, but treat me like a gentleman—Don't expose me unnecessarily.

Leech. Expose you, master! we never expose any body; 'tis gentlemen that expose themselves, venever they compels their creditors to arrest them.

Con. And where's your authority for arresting the gentleman? let us see it this minute, for may be you hav'n't it about you.

Leech. O here's our authority; ve knew as we had to do vid a lawyer, and so we came properly prepared, my master.

Lees. What shall I do?

Con. Why hark'e, sir—Don't you think that you and I could beat these three theeves to their hearts content?—I have nothing but my carcase to venter for you, honey, but that you are as welcome to as the flowers in May.

Lees. O, by no means, Connolly, we must not fly in the face of the laws.

Con. That's the reason that you are going to fight a duel.

Lees. Hark'e, officer—I have some very material business to execute in the course of this evening: here are five guineas for a little indulgence, and I assure you, upon the honour of a gentleman, that if I have life, I'll attend your own appointment to-morrow morning.

Leech. I can't do it, master—Five guineas to be sure is a genteel thing, but I have ten for the taking of you, do you see, and so, if you please to step to my house in Southampton Buildings, you may send for some friend to bail you, or settle the affair as well as you can with the plaintiff.

Con. I'll go bail for him this minute, if you don't want somebody to be bail for myself.

Lees. Let me reflect a moment.

Crow. (To *CON.*) Can you swear yourself worth one hundred and seventy pounds when your debts are paid?

Con. In troth I cannot, nor one hundred and seventy pence—unless I have a mind to perjure myself.—But one man's body is as good as another's, and since he has no bail to give you but his flesh, the fat-test of us two is the best security.

Wolf. No, if we can't get better bail than you, we shall lock up his body in prison according to law.

Con. Faith, and a very wise law it must be, which cuts off every method of getting money, by way of making us pay our debts.

Leech. Well, Master Leeson, what do you determine upon?

Lees. A moment's patience—Yonder I see Mr Torrington—a thought occurs—yet it carries the appearance of fraud—however as it will be really innocent, nay laughable in the end, and as my ruin or salvation depends upon my present decision, it must be hazarded.

Crow. Come, master, fix upon something, and don't keep us waiting for you.

Con. By my soul, honey, he don't want you to wait for him; he'll be very much obliged to you if you go away, and leave him to follow his own business.

Lees. Well, gentlemen—here comes Mr Torrington: you know him, I suppose, and will be satisfied with his security.

Leech. O, we'll take his bail for ten thousand pounds, my master—Every body knows him to be a man of fortune.

Lees. Give me leave to speak to him then, and I shall not be ungrateful for the civility.

Leech. Well, we will—But, hark'e, lads, look to the passes, that no tricks may be played upon travellers.

Enter TORRINGTON.

Lees. Mr Torrington, your most obedient.

Tor. Your humble servant.

Lees. I have many apologies to make, Mr Torrington, for presuming to stop a gentleman to whom I have not the honour of being known: yet when I explain the nature of my business, sir, I shall by no means despair of an excuse.

Tor. To the business, I beg, sir.

Lees. You must know, sir, that the three gentlemen behind me are three traders from Dantzic, men of considerable property, who, in the present distracted state of Poland, wish to settle with their families in this country.

Tor. Dantzic traders!—Ay, I see, they are foreigners by their dress.

Leech. Ay, now he is opening the affair.

Lees. They want therefore to be naturalized, and have been recommended to me for legal advice.

Tor. You are at the bar, sir?

Lees. I have eat my way to professional honour some time, sir.

Tor. Ay, the cooks of the four societies take care that the students shall perform every thing which depends upon teeth, young gentleman.—The eating exercises are the only ones never dispensed with.

Lees. I am, however, a very young barrister, Mr Torrington; and as the affair is of great importance to them, I am desirous that some gentleman of eminence in the law shou'd revise my poor opinion, before they make it a ground of any serious determination.

Tor. You are too modest, young gentleman, to entertain any doubts upon this occasion, as nothing is clearer than the laws with respect to the naturalization of foreigners.

Con. Faith the old gentleman smiles very good-naturedly.

Leech. I fancy he'll stand it, Crow, and advance the crop for the younker.

Lees. To be sure the laws are very clear to gentlemen of your superior abilities ; but I have candidly acknowledged the weakness of my own judgment to my clients, and advised them so warmly to solicit your opinion, that they will not be satisfied unless you kindly consent to oblige them.

Tor. O, if nothing but my opinion will satisfy them, let them follow me to my chambers, and I'll satisfy them directly.

Lees. You are extremely kind, sir, and they shall attend you.—Gentlemen, will you be so good as to follow Mr Torrington to his chambers, and he'll satisfy you entirely.

Wolf. Mind that !

Con. Musha ! the blessing of St Patrick upon that ould head of yours.

Tor. What, they speak English, do they ?

Lees. Very tolerably, sir !—Bred up general traders, they have a knowledge of several languages ; and it would be highly for the good of the kingdom, if we cou'd get more of them to settle among us.

Tor. Right, young gentleman ! the number of the people forms the true riches of a state ; however, now-a-days, London itself is not only gone out of town, but England itself, by an unaccountable fatality, seems inclined to take up her residence in America.

Lees. True, sir ; and, to cultivate the barbarous borders of the Ohio, we are hourly deserting the beautiful banks of the Thames.

Tor. (*Shaking him by the hand.*) You must come and see me at chambers, young gentleman ! we must be better known to one another.

Con. Do you mind that, you thieves ?

Lees. 'Twill be equally my pride and my happiness to merit that honour, sir.

Tor. Let your friends follow me, sir;—and pray do you call upon me soon; you shall see a little plan which I have drawn up to keep this poor country, if possible, from undergoing a general sentence of transportation.—Be pleased to come along with me, gentlemen—I'll satisfy you. (*Exit.*

Leech. Well, master! I wish you joy.—You can't say but we behaved to you like gemmen!

[*Exeunt Bailiffs.*

Lees. And if you were all three in the cart, I don't know which of you I wou'd wish to have respited from execution. I have played Mr Torrington a little trick, Connolly, but the moment I come back I shall recover my reputation, if I even put myself voluntarily into the hands of these worthy gentlemen.

(*Exit.*

Con. Musha! long life to you, old Shillaley; I don't wonder at your being afraid of a prison, for 'tis to be sure a blessed place to live in!—And now let my thick skull consider if there's any way of preventing this infernal duel.—Suppose I have him bound over to the peace!—No, that will never do: it would be a shameful thing for a gentleman to keep the peace! besides, I must appear in the business, and people may then think, from my connection with him, that he hasn't honour enough to throw away his life!—Suppose I go another way to work, and send an anonymous letter about the affair to Mrs Belville; they say, though she is a woman of quality, that no creature upon earth can be fonder of her husband!—Surely the good genius of Ireland put this scheme in my head.—I'll about it this minute, and if there's but one of them kept from the field, I don't think that the other can be much hurt, when there will be nobody to fight with him.

(*Exit.*

SCENE VII.

CAPTAIN SAVAGE'S *Lodgings*.

Enter CAPTAIN SAVAGE *and* BELVILLE.

Capt. Why, faith, Belville, your detection, and so speedily too, after all the pretended sanctity of the morning, must have thrown you into a most humiliating situation.

Bel. Into the most distressing you can imagine: had my wife raved at my falsehood, in the customary manner, I could have brazened it out pretty tolerably; but the angel-like sweetness, with which she bore the mortifying discovery, planted daggers in my bosom, and made me at that time wish her the veriest vixen in the whole creation.

Capt. Yet the suffering forbearance of a wife is a quality for which she is seldom allowed her merit: we think it her duty to put up with our falsehood, and imagine ourselves exceedingly generous in the main, if we practise no other method of breaking her heart.

Bel. Monstrous! monstrous! from this moment I bid an everlasting adieu to my vices: the generosity of my dear girl—

Enter a Servant to BELVILLE.

Serv. Here's a letter, sir, which Mr Spruce has brought you.

Bel. Give me leave, Savage—Zounds! what an industrious devil the father of darkness is, when, the

moment a man determines upon a good action, he sends such a thing as this, to stagger his resolution.

Capt. What have you got there?

Bel. You shall know presently. Will you let Spruce come in?

Capt. Where have you acquired all this ceremony?

Bel. Bid Spruce come in.

Serv. Yes, sir.

Capt. Is that another challenge?

Bel. 'Tis, upon my soul, but it came from a beautiful enemy, and dares me to give a meeting to Miss Walsingham.

Capt. How!

Enter SPRUCE.

Bel. Pray, Spruce, who gave you this letter?

Spruce. Miss Walsingham's woman, sir: she said it was about very particular business, and therefore I wou'dn't trust it by any of the footmen.

Capt. O, damn your diligence! (*Aside.*)

Bel. You may go home, Spruce.

Spruce. (*Looking significantly at his master.*) Is there no answer necessary, sir?

Bel. I shall call at home myself, and give the necessary answer.

Spruce. (*Aside.*) What can be the matter with him all on a sudden, that he is so cold upon the scent of wickedness? (*Exit.*)

Capt. And what answer do you propose making to it, Belville?

Bel. Read the letter, and then tell me what I should do—You know Miss Walsingham's hand?

Capt. O perfectly!—This is not—yes, it is her hand!—I have too many curst occasions to know it.

Bel. What are you muttering about?—Read the letter. (*Aside.*)

Capt. *If you are not entirely discouraged by our*

last conversation, from renewing the subject which then gave offence——

Bel. Which then gave offence!—You see, Savage, that it is not offensive any longer.

Capt. 'Sdeath! you put me out!—You may at the masquerade, this evening——

Bel. You remember how earnest she was for the masquerade party.

Capt. Yes, yes, I remember it well:—and I remember, also, how hurt she was this morning about the affair of Miss Leeson. (*Aside.*)—Have an opportunity of entertaining me——O the strumpet!

(*Aside.*

Bel. But mind the cunning with which she signs the note, for fear it shou'd by any accident fall into improper hands.

Capt. Ay, and you put it into very proper hands. (*Aside.*) I shall be in the blue domino—The signature is—

YOU KNOW WHO.

Bel. Yes, you know who.

Capt. May be, however, she has only written this to try you.

Bel. To try me! for what purpose? But if you read a certain postscript there, I fancy you'll be of a different opinion.

Capt. If Mr Belville has any house of character to retire to, it wou'd be most agreeable, as there cou'd be no fear of interruption.

Bel. What do you say now?—Can you recommend me to any house of character, where we shall be free from interruption?

Capt. O, curse her house of character! (*Aside.*) But surely, Belville, after your late determined resolution to reform——

Bel. Zounds! I forgot that.

Capt. After the unexampled sweetness of your wife's behaviour——

Bel. Don't go on, Savage: there is something here

(*Putting his hand upon his bosom.*) which feels already not a little awkwardly.

Capt. And can you still persist?

Bel. I am afraid to answer your question.

Capt. Where the plague are you flying?

Bel. From the justice of your censure, Horace, my own is sufficiently severe; yet I see that I shall be a rascal again, in spite of my teeth; and good advice is only thrown away upon so incorrigible a libertine. (*Exit.*)

Capt. (*Alone.*) So then, this diamond of mine proves a counterfeit after all, and I am really the veriest wretch existing at the moment in which I conceived myself the peculiar favourite of fortune. O the cursed, cursed sex! I'll see her once more to upbraid her with her falsehood, then acquaint my father with her perfidy, to justify my breaking off the marriage, and tear her from my thoughts for ever.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir! sir! sir!—

Capt. Sir, sir, sir.—What the devil's the matter with the booby!

Serv. Miss Walsingham, sir!

Capt. Ah! what of her?

Serv. Was this moment overturned at Mr Belville's door; and John tells me carried in a fit into the house.

Capt. Ha! let me fly to her assistance. (*Exit.*)

Serv. Ha, let me fly to her assistance—O, are you thereabouts! (*Exit.*)

SCENE VIII.

MR BELVILLE'S.

*Enter MRS BELVILLE, MISS WALSHINGHAM, and
LADY RACHEL MILDEW.*

Mrs Bel. But are you indeed recovered, my dear?

Miss Wal. Perfectly, my dear—I wasn't in the least hurt though greatly terrified, when the two fools of coachmen contended for the honour of being first, and drove the carriages together with a violence incredible.

Lady Rach. I sincerely rejoice at your escape; and now, Mrs Belville, as you promised to choose a dress for me if I went in your party to the masquerade this evening, can you spare a quarter of an hour to Tavistock-Street?

Mrs Bel. I am loth to leave Miss Walsingham alone, Lady Rachel, so soon after her fright.

Miss Wal. Nay, I insist that you don't stay at home upon my account; and Lady Rachel's company to the masquerade is a pleasure I have such an interest in, that I beg you won't delay a moment to oblige her

Mrs Bel. Well, then I attend your ladyship.

Lady Rach. You are very good, and so is Miss Walsingham. *(Exit.)*

Miss Wal. I wonder Captain Savage stays away so long! where can he be all this time?—I die with impatience to tell him of my happy interview with the general.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Captain Savage, madam.

Miss Wal. Shew him in. (*Exit Serv.*) How he must rejoice to find his conjectures so fortunately realized.

Enter CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

Capt. So, madam, you have just escaped a sad accident.

Miss Wal. And by that agreeable tone and countenance, one would almost imagine you were very sorry for my escape.

Capt. People, madam, who doubt the kindness of others, are generally conscious of some defect in themselves.

Miss Wal. Don't madam me, with this accent of indifference. What has put you out of humour?

Capt. Nothing.

Miss Wal. Are you indisposed?

Capt. The crocodile! the crocodile! (*Aside.*

Miss Wal. Do you go to the masquerade to-night?

Capt. No, but you do.

Miss Wal. Why not? Come, don't be ill-natured, I'm not your wife yet.

Capt. Nor ever will be, I promise you.

Miss Wal. What is the meaning of this very whimsical behaviour?

Capt. The settled composure of her impudence is intolerable. (*Aside.*) Madam, madam, how have I deserved this usage?

Miss Wal. Nay, sir, sir, how have I deserved it, if you go to that?

Capt. The letter, madam!—the letter!

Miss Wal. What letter?

Capt. Your letter, inviting a gallant from the masquerade to a house of character, madam!—What, you appear surprised?

Miss Wal. Well I may, at so shameless an aspersion.

Capt. Madam, madam, I have seen your letter ! Your new lover cou'dn't keep your secret a moment. But I have nothing to do with you, and only come to declare my reasons for renouncing you everlastingly !

Enter Servant.

Serv. General Savage, madam.

Miss Wal. Shew him up: (*Exit Serv.*) I am glad he is come, sir ; inform him of your resolution to break off the match, and let there be an end of every thing between us.

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE.

Gen. The news of your accident reached me but this moment, madam, or I should have posted much sooner to reconnoitre your situation. My aid-de-camp, however, has not been inattentive I see, and I dare say his diligence will not be the least lessened, when he knows his obligations to you.

Capt. O, sir, I am perfectly sensible of my obligations ; and the consciousness of them was one motive of my coming here.

Gen. Then you have made your acknowledgments to Miss Walsingham, I hope.

Miss Wal. He has indeed, General, said a great deal more than was necessary.

Gen. That opinion proceeds from the liberality of your temper ; for 'tis impossible he can ever say enough of your goodness.

Capt. So it is ; if you knew but all, sir.

Gen. Why, who can think more of the matter than myself ?

Miss Wal. This gentleman, it seems, has something, General Savage, very necessary for your information.

Gen. How's this?

Capt. Nay, sir, I only say, that for some particular reasons which I shall communicate to you at a more proper time, I must beg leave to decline the lady whose hand you kindly intended for me this morning.

Gen. O you must!—Why then I hope you decline at the same time all pretension to every shilling of my fortune? It is not in my power to make you fight, you poltroon, but I can punish you for cowardice.

Miss Wal. Nay, but, General, let me interpose here. If he can maintain any charge against the lady's reputation, 'twould be very hard that he should be disinherited for a necessary attention to his honour.

Capt. And if I don't make the charge good, I submit to be disinherited without murmuring.

Gen. 'Tis false as hell! the lady is infinitely too good for you in every respect; and I undervalued her worth when I thought of her for your wife.

Miss Wal. I am sure the lady is much obliged to your favourable opinion, sir.

Gen. Not in the least, madam; I only do her common justice.

Capt. I cannot bear that you should be displeased a moment, sir; suffer me therefore to render the conversation less equivocal, and a few words will explain every thing.

Gen. Sirrah, I'll hear no explanation; ar'n't my orders that you shou'd marry?

Miss Wal. For my sake hear him, General Savage.

Capt. Madam, I disdain every favour that is to be procured by your interposition. (Exit.

Miss Wal. This matter must not be suffered to proceed farther though, provokingly, cruelly as the captain has behaved. (Aside.

Gen. What's that you say, my bewitching girl?

Miss Wal. I say that you must make it up with the Captain, and the best way will be to hear his charge patiently.

Gen. I am shocked at the brutality of the dog ; he has no more principle than a suttler, and no more steadiness than a young recruit upon drill. But you shall have ample satisfaction :—this very day I'll cut him off from a possibility of succeeding to a shilling of my fortune. He shall be as miserable as——

Miss Wal. Dear General, do you think that this wou'd give me any satisfaction ?

Gen. How he became acquainted with my design I know not, but I see plainly that his mutiny proceeds from his aversion to my marrying again.

Miss Wal. To your marrying again, sir ! why shou'd he object to that ?

Gen. Why, for fear I should have other children, to be sure.

Miss Wal. Indeed, sir, it was not from that motive ; and, if I can overlook his folly, you may be prevailed upon to forgive it.

Gen. After what you have seen, justice shou'd make you a little more attentive to your own interest, my lovely girl.

Miss Wal. What, at the expence of his ?

Gen. In the approaching change of your situation, there may be a family of your own.

Miss Wal. Suppose there shou'd, sir, won't there be a family of his too ?

Gen. I care not what becomes of his family

Miss Wal. But, pray let me think a little about it, General.

Gen. 'Tis hard, indeed, when I was so desirous of promoting his happiness, that he shou'd throw any thing in the way of mine.

Miss Wal. Recollect, sir, his offence was wholly confined to me.

Gen. Well, my love, and isn't it throwing an ob-

stacle in the way of my happiness, when he abuses you so grossly for your readiness to marry me?

Miss Wal. Sir!—

Gen. I see, with all your good nature, that this is a question you cannot rally against.

Miss Wal. It is indeed, sir.—What will become of me? [Aside.

Gen. You seem suddenly disordered, my love?

Miss Wal. Why really, sir, this affair affects me strongly.

Gen. Well, it is possible, that for your sake I may not punish him with as much severity as I intended: in about an hour I shall beg leave to beat up your quarters again with Mr Torrington, for 'tis necessary I should shew you some proof of my gratitude, since you have been so kindly pleased to honour me with a proof of your affection.

Miss Wal. (Aside.) So, now indeed we're in a hopeful situation. [Exeunt.

SCENE IX.

TORRINGTON'S Chambers in the Temple.

Enter TORRINGTON, LEECH, CROW, and WOLF.

Tor. Walk in, gentlemen—A good pretty young man that we parted with just now—Pray, gentlemen, be seated.

Leech. He is indeed a very pretty young man.

Crow. And knows how to do a genteel thing.

Wolf. As handsome as any body.

Tor. There is a rectitude besides in his polemical principles.

Leech. In what, sir ?

Tor. His polemical principles.

Crow. What are they, sir ?

Tor. I beg pardon, gentlemen, you are not sufficiently intimate with the English language to carry on a conversation in it.

Wolf. Yes, we are, sir.

Tor. Because, if it is more agreeable to you, we'll talk in Latin.

Leech. We don't understand Latin, sir.

Tor. I thought you generally conversed in that language abroad.

Crow. No, nor at home neither, sir ; there is a language we sometimes talk in, called slang.

Tor. A species of the ancient Slavonic, I suppose ?

Leech. No, it's a little rum tongue, that we understand among von another.

Tor. I never heard of it before—But to business, gentlemen—The constitution of your country is at present very deplorable, I hear.

Wolf. Why indeed, sir, there never was a greater cry against people in our way.

Tor. But you have laws, I suppose, for the regulation of your trade ?

Leech. To be sure we have, sir, nevertheless we find it very difficult to carry it on.

Crow. We are harrassed with so many oppressions—

Tor. What, by the Prussian troops ?

Crow. The Prussian troops, sir—Lord bless you, no, by the courts of law ; if we make never so small a mistake in our duties—

Tor. Then your duties are very high, or very numerous ?

Leech. I am afraid we don't understand one another, sir.

Tor. I am afraid so too—Pray where are your papers, gentlemen?

Leech. Here's all the papers we have, sir—You'll find every thing right.

Tor. I dare say I shall. (*Reads.*) "Middlesex to wit"—Why this is a warrant from the sheriff's office to arrest some body.

Crow. To be sure it is, sir.

Tor. And what do you give it to me for?

Wolf. To shew that we have done nothing contrary to law, sir.

Tor. Who supposes that you have?

Leech. Only because you asked for our papers, sir.

Tor. Why what has this to do with them?

Crow. Why, that's the warrant for arresting the young gentleman.

Tor. What young gentleman?

Wolf. Lord bless your heart, sir, that stopped you in the street, and that you bail'd for the hundred and seventy pounds.

Tor. I bail'd for an hundred and seventy pounds!

Leech. Sure, sir, you told me to follow you to chambers, and you would satisfy us.

Tor. Pray hear me, sir; aren't you a trader of Dantzic?

Leech. I a trader! I am no trader, nor did I ever before hear of any such place.

Tor. Perhaps this gentleman is.

Crow. Lord help your head, I was born in Clare-market, and never was farther out of town in my life than Brentford, to attend the sheriff at the Middlesex election.

Tor. And it may be that you don't want to be naturalized? [To WOLF.

Wolf. For what, my master? I am a liveryman of London already, and have a vote besides for the four counties.

Tor. Well, gentlemen, having been so good as to tell me what you are not, add a little to the obligation, and tell me what you are?

Leech. Why, sir, the warrant we have shewed you, tells that ve are sheriff's officers.

Tor. Sheriff's officers are you?—O ho—sheriff's officers—then I suppose you must be three very honest gentlemen.

Crow. Sir!—we are as honest—

Tor. As sheriff's officers usually are.—Yet cou'd you think of nobody but a man of the law for the object of your conspiracy?

Leech. Sir, we don't understand what you mean.

Tor. But I understand what you mean, and therefore I'll deal with you properly.

Wolf. I hope, sir, you'll pay us the money, for we can't go till the affair is certainly settled in some manner.

Tor. Oh, you can't—why then I will pay you; but it shall be in a coin you won't like, depend upon it.—Here, Mr Molesworth—

Enter MOLESWORTH.

Tor. Make out mittimusses for the commitment of these three fellows; they are disguised to defraud people; but I am in the commission for Middlesex, and I'll have you all brought to justice.—I will teach you to go masquerading about the streets.—So take them along, Mr Molesworth.

Leech. Ve don't fear your mittimus.

Crow. We'll put in bail directly, and try it with you, though you are a great lawyer.

Wolf. He'll make a flat of himself in this Nantzick affair.

Tor. Mighty well—And, if I find the young barrister, he may, perhaps, take a trip to the barbarous borders of the Ohio from the beautiful banks of the Thames.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

An Apartment at BELVILLE'S.

Enter Mrs BELVILLE and Captain SAVAGE.

Mrs Bel. Don't argue with me, Captain Savage ; but consider that I am a wife, and pity my distraction.

Capt. Dear madam, there is no occasion to be so much alarmed ; Mr Belville has very properly determined not to fight ; he told me so himself, and should have been effectually prevented, if I hadn't known his resolution.

Mrs Bel. There is no knowing to what extremities he may be provoked, if he meets Mr Leeson ; I have sent for you, therefore, to beg that you will save him from the possibility, either of exposing himself to any danger, or of doing an injury to his adversary.

Capt. What wou'd you have me do, madam ?

Mrs Bel. Fly to Hyde-Park, and prevent, if yet possible, his meeting with Mr Leeson : do it, I conjure you, if you'd save me from desperation.

Capt. Though you have no reason whatever to be apprehensive for his safety, madam, yet, since you are so very much affected, I'll immediately execute your commands. [Exit.

Mrs Bel. Merciful Heaven! where is the generosity, where is the sense, where is the shame of men, to find a pleasure in pursuits which they cannot remember without the deepest horror; which they cannot follow without the meanest fraud; and which they cannot effect without consequences the most dreadful? The single word pleasure, in a masculine sense, comprehends every thing that is cruel, every thing that is base, and every thing that is desperate: yet men, in other respects the noblest of their species, make it the principal business of their lives, and do not hesitate to break in upon the peace of the happiest families, though their own must be necessarily exposed to destruction!—O Belville! Belville!—my love!—The greatest crime which a libertine can ever experience, is too despicable to be envied; 'tis at best nothing but a victory over his own humanity; and if he is a husband, he must be dead indeed, if he is not doubly tortured upon the wheel of recollection!

Enter MISS WALSHINGHAM and LADY RACHEL MILDEW.

Miss Wal. My dear Mrs Belville, I am extremely unhappy to see you so distressed.

Lady Rach. Now I am extremely glad to see her so, for if she wasn't greatly distressed it wou'd be monstrously unnatural.

Mrs Bel. O, Matilda!—my husband! my husband! my children! my children!

Miss Wal. Don't weep, my dear, don't weep; pray be comforted, all may end happily. Lady Rachel, beg of her not to cry so.

Lady Rach. Why, you are crying yourself, Miss

Walsingham ; and though I think it out of character to encourage her tears, I can't help keeping you company.

Mrs Bel. O, why is not some effectual method contrived to prevent this horrible practice of duelling !

Lady Rach. I'll expose it on the stage, since the law now-a-days kindly leaves the whole cognizance of it to the theatre.

Miss Wal. And yet if the laws against it were as well enforced as the laws against destroying the game, perhaps it would be equally for the benefit of the kingdom.

Mrs Bel. No law will ever be effectual till the custom is rendered infamous.—Wives must shriek—mothers must agonize—orphans must multiply, unless some blessed hand strips the fascinating glare from honourable murder, and bravely exposes the idol who is worshipped thus in blood. While it is disreputable to obey the laws, we cannot look for reformation :—But if the duellist is once banished from the presence of his sovereign ;—if he is for life excluded the confidence of his country ;—if a mark of indelible disgrace is stamped upon him, the sword of public justice will be the sole chastiser of wrongs ; trifles will not be punished with death, and offences really meriting such a punishment will be reserved for the only proper avenger, the common executioner.

Lady Rach. I cou'dn't have expressed myself better on the subject, my dear : but, till such a hand as you talk of is found, the best will fall into the error of the times.

Miss Wal. Yes, and butcher each other like madmen, for fear their courage should be suspected by fools.

Mrs Bel. No news yet from Captain Savage ?

Lady Rach. He can't have reached Hyde-park yet, my dear.

Miss Wal. Let us lead you to your chamber, my dear; you'll be better there.

Mrs Bel. Matilda, I must be wretched any where; but I'll attend you.

Lady Rach. Thank heaven I have no husband to plunge into such a situation.

Miss Wal. And, if I thought I cou'd keep my resolution, I'd determine this moment on living single all the days of my life. Pray don't spare my arm, my dear. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

Hyde-Park.

Enter BELVILLE.

Bel. I fancy I am rather before the time of appointment; engagements of this kind are the only ones in which, now-a-days, people pretend to any punctuality:—a man is allowed half an hour's law to dinner, but a thrust through the body must be given within a second of the clock.

Enter LEESON.

Lees. Your servant, sir.—Your name I suppose is Belville?

Bel. Your supposition is very right, sir; and I fancy I am not much in the wrong when I suppose your name to be Leeson?

Lees. It is, sir; I am sorry I shou'd keep you here a moment.

Bel. I am very sorry, sir, you shou'd bring me here at all.

Lees. I regret the occasion, be assured, sir ; but 'tis not now a time for talking—we must proceed to action.

Bel. And yet talking is all the action I shall proceed to, depend upon it.

Lees. What do you mean, sir ? where are your pistols ?

Bel. Where I intend they shall remain till my next journey into the country—very quietly over the chimney in my dressing-room.

Lees. You treat this matter with too much levity, Mr Belville ; take your choice of mine, sir.

Bel. I'd rather take them both, if you please, for then no mischief shall be done with either of them.

Lees. Sir, this trifling is adding insult to injury, and shall be resented accordingly. Didn't you come here to give me satisfaction ?

Bel. Yes, every satisfaction in my power.

Lees. Take one of these pistols then.

Bel. Come, Mr Leeson, your bravery will not at all be lessened by the exercise of a little understanding : if nothing less than my life can atone for the injury I have unconsciously done you, fire at me instantly, but don't be offended because I decline to do you an additional wrong.

Lees. 'Sdeath, sir ! do you think I come here with an intention to murder ?

Bel. You come to arm the guilty against the innocent, sir ; and that, in my opinion, is the most atrocious intention of murder.

Lees. How's this ?

Bel. Look'e, Mr Leeson, there's your pistol—*(Throws it on the ground.)* I have already acted very wrongly with respect to your sister ; but, sir, I have some character (though perhaps little enough)

to maintain, and I will not do still a worse action, in raising my hand against your life.

Lees. This hypocritical cant of cowardice, sir, is too palpable to disarm my resentment; though I held you to be a man of profligate principles, I nevertheless considered you as a man of courage; but, if you hesitate a moment longer, by heaven I'll chastise you on the spot. (*Draws.*)

Bel. I must defend my life; though, if it did not look like timidity, I would inform you—(*They fight, LEESON is disarmed.*) Mr Leeson, there is your sword again.

Lees. Strike it through my bosom, sir;—I don't desire to out-live this instant.

Bel. I hope, my dear sir, that you will long live happy, as your sister, though to my shame I can claim no merit on that account, is recovered unpoluted by her family; but let me beg that you will now see the folly of decisions by the sword, when success is not fortunately chained to the side of justice: before I leave you, receive my sincerest apologies for the injuries I have done you; and be assured no occurrence will give me greater pleasure, than an opportunity of serving you, if, after what is past, you shall at any time condescend to use me as a friend.

[*Exit.*]

Lees. Very well—very well—very well.

Enter CONNOLLY.

Lees. What, you have been within hearing I suppose?

Con. You may say that.

Lees. And isn't this very fine?

Con. Why I can't say much as to the finery of it, sir, but it is very foolish.

Lees. And so this is my satisfaction after all.

Con. Yes, and pretty satisfaction it is. When Mr Belville did you but one injury, he was the greatest

villain in the world ; but now that he has done you two, in drawing his sword upon you, I suppose he is a very worthy gentleman.

Lees. To be foil'd, baffled, disappointed in my revenge !—What, though my sister is by accident unstained, his intentions are as criminal as if her ruin was actually perpetrated ; there is no possibility of enduring this reflection !—I wish not for the blood of my enemy, but I would at least have the credit of giving him his life.

Con. Arrah, my dear, if you had any regard for the life of your enemy, you shou'dn't put him in the way of death.

Lees. No more of these reflections, my dear Connolly ; my own feelings are painful enough. Will you be so good as to take these damned pistols, and come with me to the coach ?

Con. Troth and that I will ; but don't make yourself uneasy : consider that you have done every thing which honour required at your hands.

Lees. I hope so.

Con. Why you know so ; you have broke the laws of heaven and earth, as nobly as the first lord in the land, and you have convinced the world, that where any body has done your family one injury, you have courage enough to do it another yourself, by hazarding your life.

Lees. Those, Connolly, who would live reputably in any country, must regulate their conduct in many cases by its very prejudices.—Custom, with respect to duelling, is a tyrant, whose despotism no body ventures to attack, though every body detests its cruelty.

Con. I didn't imagine that a tyrant of any kind would be tolerated in England. But where do you think of going now ? For chambers, you know, will be most delightfully dangerous, till you have come to an explanation with Mr Torrington.

Lees. I shall go to Mrs Crayons's.

Con. What, the gentlewoman that paints all manner of colours in red chalk?

Lees. Yes, where I first became acquainted with Emily.

Con. And where the sweet creature has met you two to three times, under pretence of sitting for her picture.

Lees. Mrs Crayons will, I dare say, oblige me in this exigency with an apartment for a few days. I shall write, from her house, a full explanation of my conduct to Mr Torrington, and let him know where I am: for the honest old man must not be the smallest sufferer, though a thousand prisons were to stare me in the face.—But come, Connolly, we have no time to lose.—Yet if you had any prudence, you would abandon me in my present situation.

Con. Ah, sir, is this your opinion of my friendship? Do you think that any thing can ever give me half so much pleasure in serving you, as seeing you surrounded by misfortunes? *(Exeunt.)*

SCENE III.

An Apartment at BELVILLE'S.

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE, TORRINGTON, *and* SPRUCE.

Spruce. Miss Walsingham will wait on you immediately, gentlemen.

Gen. Very well.

Spruce. *(Aside.)* What can old Holifernes want so continually with Miss Walsingham? *(Exit.)*

Gen. When I bring this sweet mild creature home, I shall be able to break her spirit to my own wishes

—I'll inure her to proper discipline from the first moment, and make her tremble at the very thought of mutiny.

Tor. Ah, General, you are wonderfully brave, when you know the meekness of your adversary.

Gen. Envy, Torrington—stark, staring envy: few fellows on the borders of fifty have so much reason as myself to boast of a blooming young woman's partiality.

Tor. On the borders of fifty, man!—beyond the confines of threescore.

Gen. The more reason I have to boast of my victory then; but don't grumble at my triumph: you shall have a kiss of the bride, let that content you, Torrington.

Enter MISS WALSINGHAM.

Miss Wal. Gentlemen, your most obedient; General, I intended writing to you about a trifling mistake; but poor Mrs Belville has been so very ill, that I cou'dn't find an opportunity.

Gen. I am very sorry for Mrs Belville's illness, but I am happy, madam, to be personally in the way of receiving your commands, and I wait upon you with Mr Torrington, to talk about a marriage settlement.

Miss Wal. Heavens! how shall I undeceive him!
(*Aside.*)

Tor. 'Tis rather an awkward business, Miss Walsingham, to trouble you upon; but as the General wishes that the affair may be as private as possible, he thought it better to speak to yourself than to treat with any other person.

Gen. Yes, my lovely girl; and to convince you that I intended to carry on an honourable war, not to pillage like a free-booter, Mr Torrington will be a trustee.

Miss Wal. I am infinitely obliged to your intention, but there's no necessity to talk about my settlement—
—for—

Gen. Pardon me, madam,—pardon me, there is—besides, I have determined that there shall be one, and what I once determine is absolute.—A tolerable hint for her own behaviour, when I have married her, Torrington. (*Aside to Tor.*)

Miss Wal. I must not shock him before Mr Torrington. (*Aside.*) General Savage, will you give me leave to speak a few words in private to you?

Gen. There is no occasion for sounding a retreat, madam; Mr Torrington is acquainted with the whole business, and I am determined, for your sake, that nothing shall be done without him.

Tor. I can have no objection to your hearing the lady *ex parte*, General.

Miss Wal. What I have to say, sir, is of a very particular nature.

Tor. (*Rising.*) I'll leave the room then.

Gen. (*Opposing him.*) You sha'n't leave the room, Torrington. Miss Walsingham shall have a specimen of my command, even before marriage, and you shall see that every woman is not to bully me out of my determination. (*Aside to Tor.*)

Miss Wal. Well, General, you must have your own way.

Gen. (*To Tor.*) Don't you see that 'tis only fighting the battle stoutly at first with one of these gentle creatures?

Tor. (*Significantly.*) Ah, General!

Gen. I own, madam, your situation is a distressing one; let us sit down—let us sit down——

Miss Wal. It is unspeakably distressing indeed, sir.

Tor. Distressing however as it may be, we must proceed to issue, madam; the General proposes your jointure to be 1000*l.* a year.

Miss Wal. General Savage!

Gen. You think this is too little, perhaps?

Miss Wal. I can't think of any jointure, sir.

Tor. Why to be sure, a jointure is at best but a

melancholy possession, for it must be purchased by the loss of the husband you love.

Miss Wal. Pray don't name it, Mr Torrington.

Gen. (*Kissing her hand.*) A thousand thanks to you, my lovely girl.

Miss Wal. For heaven's sake let go my hand.

Gen. I shall be mad till it gives me legal possession of the town.

Miss Wal. Gentlemen—General—Mr Torrington, I—beg you'll hear me.

Gen. By all means, my adorable creature; I can never have too many proofs of your disinterested affection.

Miss Wal. There is a capital mistake in this whole affair—I am sinking under a load of distress.

Gen. Your confusion makes you look charmingly, though——

Miss Wal. There is no occasion to talk of jointures or marriages to me; I am not going to be married.

Tor. What's this?

Miss Wal. Nor have I an idea in nature, however enviable I think the honour, of being your wife, sir.

Gen. Madam!

Tor. Why here's a demur!

Miss Wal. I am afraid, sir, that in our conversation this morning, my confusion, arising from the particularity of the subject, has led you into a material misconception.

Gen. I am thunder-struck, madam! I cou'dn't mistake my ground.

Tor. As clear a *nol. pros.* as ever was issued by an attorney-general.

Gen. Surely you can't forget, that at the first word you hung out a flag of truce, told me even that I had a previous friend in the fort, and didn't so much as hint a single article of capitulation?

Tor. Now for the rejoinder to this replication.

Miss Wal. All this is unquestionably true, General,

and perhaps a good deal more ; but in reality my confusion before you on this subject to-day was such, that I scarcely knew what I said ; I was dying with distress, and at this moment am very little better ;—permit me to retire, General Savage, and only suffer me to add, that, though I think myself highly flattered by your addresses, it is impossible for me ever to receive them. Lord ! Lord ! I am glad 'tis over in any manner ! [Exit.]

Tor. Why, we are a little out in this matter, General ; the judge has decided against us, when we imagined ourselves sure of the cause.

Gen. The gates shut in my teeth, just as I expected the keys from the governor !

Tor. I am disappointed myself, man ; I sha'n't have a kiss of the bride.

Gen. At my time of life too !

Tor. I said from the first you were too old for her.

Gen. Zounds, to fancy myself sure of her, and to triumph upon a certainty of victory !

Tor. Ay, and to kiss her hand in a rapturous return for her tenderness to you : let me advise you never to kiss before folks as long as you live again.

Gen. Don't distract me, Torrington ! a joke, where a friend has the misfortune to lose the battle, is a downright inhumanity.

Tor. You told me that your son had accused her of something that you would not hear ; suppose we call at his lodgings, he perhaps, as an *amicus curiæ*, may be able to give us a little information.

Gen. Thank you for the thought ;—but keep your finger more than ever upon your lips, dear Torrington. You know how I dread the danger of ridicule, and it wou'd be too much, not only to be thrashed out of the field, but to be laughed at into the bargain.

Tor. I thought when you made a presentment of your sweet person to Miss Walsingham, that the bill wou'd be returned ignoramus. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

BELVILLE'S.

MRS BELVILLE and LADY RACHEL MILDEW, *discovered on a Sofa.*

Lady Rach. You heard what Captain Savage said?

Mrs Bel. I would flatter myself, but my heart will not suffer it; the Park might be too full for the horrid purpose, and, perhaps they are gone to decide the quarrel in some other place.

Lady Rach. The Captain inquired of numbers in the Park without hearing a syllable of them, and is therefore positive that they are parted without doing any mischief.

Mrs Bel. I am, nevertheless, torn by a thousand apprehensions, and my fancy, with a gloomy kind of fondness, fastens on the most deadly. This very morning I exultingly numbered myself in the catalogue of the happiest wives—Perhaps I am a wife no longer;—perhaps, my little innocents, your unhappy father is at this moment breathing his last sigh, and wishing, O, how vainly! that he had not preferred a guilty pleasure to his own life, to my eternal peace of mind, and your felicity!

Enter SPRUCE.

Spruce. Madam! madam! my master! my master!

Mrs Bel. Is he safe?

Enter BELVILLE.

Bel. My love!

Mrs Bel. O, Mr Belville !

(*Faints.*)

Bel. Assistance, quick !

Lady Rach. There she revives.

Bel. The angel-softness ! how this rends my heart !

Mrs Bel. O, Mr Belville, if you cou'd conceive the agonies I have endured, you would avoid the possibility of another quarrel as long as you lived, out of common humanity.

Bel. My dearest creature, spare these tender reproaches ; you know not how sufficiently I am punished to see you thus miserable.

Lady Rach. That's pleasant indeed, when you have yourself deliberately loaded her with affliction.

Bel. Pray, pray, Lady Rachel, have a little mercy : Your poor humble servant has been a very naughty boy,—but if you only forgive him this single time, he will never more deserve the rod of correction.

Mrs Bel. Since you are returned safe, I am happy. Excuse these foolish tears, they gush in spite of me.

Bel. How contemptible do they render me, my love !

Lady Rach. Come, my dear, you must turn your mind from this gloomy subject.—Suppose we step up stairs, and communicate our pleasure to Miss Walsingham ?

Mrs Bel. With all my heart. Adieu, recreant !

[*Exeunt* MRS BEL. and LADY RACH.]

Bel. I don't deserve such a woman, I don't deserve her.—Yet, I believe I am the first husband that ever found fault with a wife for having too much goodness.

Enter SPRUCE.

What's the matter ?

Spruce. Your sister——

Bel. What of my sister ?

Spruce. Sir, is eloped.

Bel. My sister !

Spruce. There is a letter left, sir, in which she says, that her motive was a dislike to match with Captain Savage, as she has placed her affections unalterably on another gentleman.

Bel. Death and damnation !

Spruce. Mrs Moreland, your mother, is in the greatest distress, sir, and begs you will immediately go with the servant that brought the message ; for he, observing the young lady's maid carrying some bundles out, a little suspiciously, thought there must be some scheme going on, and dogged a hackney coach, in which Miss Moreland went off, to the very house where it set her down.

Bel. Bring me to the servant, instantly ;—but don't let a syllable of this matter reach my wife's ears, her spirits are already too much agitated. *(Exit.)*

Spruce. Zounds ! we shall be paid home for the tricks we have played in other families ! *(Exit.)*

SCENE IV.

CAPTAIN SAVAGE'S Lodgings.

Enter CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

Capt. The vehemence of my resentment against this abandoned woman has certainly led me too far. I shou'dn't have acquainted her with my discovery of her baseness ;—no, if I had acted properly, I should have concealed all knowledge of the transaction till the very moment of her guilt, and then burst upon her when she was solacing with her paramour in all the fulness of security. Now, if she should either alter her mind with respect to going to the masque-

rade, or go in a different habit to elude my observation, I not only lose the opportunity of exposing her, but give her time to plan some plausible excuse for her infamous letter to Belville.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. General Savage and Mr Torrington, sir.

Capt. You blockhead, why did you let them wait a moment? What can be the meaning of this visit?

[Exit Servant.]

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE and TORRINGTON.

Gen. I come, Horace, to talk to you about Miss Walsingham.

Capt. She's the most worthless woman existing, sir: I can convince you of it.

Gen. I have already changed my own opinion of her.

Capt. What, you have found her out yourself, sir?

Tor. Yes, he has made a trifling discovery.

Gen. 'Sdeath, don't make me contemptible to my son!

(Aside to Tor.)

Capt. But, sir, what instance of her precious behaviour has come to your knowledge? For an hour has scarcely elapsed since you thought her a miracle of goodness.

Tor. Ay, he has thought her a miracle of goodness within this quarter of an hour.

Gen. Why she has a manner that wou'd impose upon all the world.

Capt. Yes, but she has a manner also to undeceive the world thoroughly.

Tor. That we have found pretty recently; however, in this land of liberty, none are to be pronounced guilty till they are positively convicted; I can't therefore find against Miss Walsingham upon the bare strength of presumptive evidence.

Capt. Presumptive evidence ! hav'n't I promised you ocular demonstration ?

Tor. Ay, but till we receive this demonstration, my good friend, we cannot give judgment.

Capt. Then I'll tell you at once who is the object of her honourable affections.

Gen. Who—who——

Capt. What would you think if they were placed on Belville ?

Gen. Upon Belville ! has she deserted to him from the corps of virtue ?

Capt. Yes, she wrote to him, desiring to be taken from the masquerade to some convenient scene of privacy, and though I have seen the letter, she has the impudence to deny her own hand.

Gen. What a fiend is there then disguised under the uniform of an angel !

Tor. The delicate creature that was dying with confusion !

Capt. Only come with me to the masquerade, and you shall see Belville carry her off : 'Twas about the scandalous appointment with him I was speaking when you conceived I treated her so rudely.

Gen. And you were only anxious to shew her in her real character to me, when I was so exceedingly offended with you ?

Capt. Nothing else in the world, sir ; I knew you would despise and detest her the moment you were acquainted with her baseness.

Gen. How she brazened it out before my face, and what a regard she affected for your interest ! I was a madman not to listen to your explanation.

Tor. Though you both talk this point well, I still see nothing but strong presumption against Miss Walsingham : Mistakes have already happened, mistakes may happen again ; and I will not give up a lady's honour upon an evidence that wou'd not cast a common pickpocket at the Old Bailey.

Capt. Come to the masquerade then, and be convinced.

Gen. Let us detach a party for dresses immediately. Yet remember, Torrington, that the punctuality of evidence which is necessary in a court of law is by no means requisite in a court of honour.

Tor. Perhaps it would be more to the honour of your honourable courts if it was, *(Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

An Apartment at MRS CRAYONS'S.

Bel. (Behind.) My dear, you must excuse me.

Maid. Indeed, sir, you must not go up stairs.

Bel. Indeed but I will ; the man is positive to the house, and I'll search every room in it, from the cellar to the garret, if I don't find the lady. James, don't stir from the street door.

Enter BELVILLE, followed by a Maid.

Maid. Sir, you are the strangest gentleman I ever met with in all my born days :—I wish my mistress was at home.

Bel. I am a strange fellow, my dear ; but if your mistress was at home, I shou'd take the liberty of peeping into the apartments.

Maid. Sir, there's company in that room, you can't go in there.

Bel. Now that's the very reason I will go in.

Maid. This must be some great man, or he wou'dn't behave so obstropolous.

Bel. Good manners, by your leave a little. *(Forcing the door.)* Whoever my gentleman is, I'll call him to

a severe reckoning :—I have just been called to one myself, for making free with another man's sister.

Enter LEESON, followed by CONNOLLY.

Lees. Who is it that dares commit an outrage upon this apartment ?

Con. An Englishman's very lodging, ay, and an Irishman's too, I hope, is his castle ;—an Irishman is an Englishman all the world over.

Bel. Mr Leeson !

Maid. O we shall have murder ! (*Running off.*)

Con. Run into that room, my dear, and stay with the young lady. (*Exit Maid.*)

Lees. And, Connolly, let nobody else into that room.

Con. Let me alone for that, honey, if this gentleman has fifty people.

Lees. Whence is it Mr, Belville, that you persecute me thus with injuries ?

Bel. I am filled with astonishment !

Con. Faith, to speak the truth, you do look a little surprised.

Lees. Answer me, sir ; what is the foundation of this new violence ?

Bel. I am come, Mr Leeson, upon an affair, sir—

Con. The devil burn me if he was half so much confounded a while ago, when there was a naked sword at his breast.

Bel. I am come, Mr Leeson, upon an affair, sir, that—How the devil shall I open it to him, since the tables are so fairly turned upon me ?

Lees. Dispatch, sir, for I have company in the next room.

Bel. A lady, I suppose ?

Lees. Suppose it is, sir ?

Bel. And the lady's name is Moreland, isn't it, sir ?

Lees. I can't see what business you have with her name, sir. You took away my sister, and I hope you have no designs upon the lady in the next room ?

Bel. Indeed but I have.

Lees. The devil you have !

Con. Well, this is the most unaccountable man I ever heard of; he'll have all the women in the town, I believe.

Lees. And pray, sir, what pretensions have you to the lady in the next room, even supposing her to be Miss Moreland ?

Bel. No other pretensions than what a brother should have to the defence of his sister's honour : You thought yourself authorised to cut my throat a while ago in a similar business.

Lees. And is Miss Moreland your sister ?

Bel. Sir, there is insolence in the question ; you know she is.

Lees. By heaven, I did not know it till this moment ; but I rejoice at the discovery : This is blow for blow !

Con. Devil burn me but they have fairly made a swop of it.

Bel. And you really didn't know that Miss Moreland was my sister ?

Lees. I don't conceive myself under much necessity of apologizing to you, sir ; but I am incapable of a dishonourable design upon any woman ; and though Miss Moreland, in our short acquaintance, repeatedly mentioned her brother, she never once told me that his name was Belville.

Con. And he has had such few opportunities of being in her company, unless by letters, honey, that he knew nothing more of her connections, than her being a sweet pretty creature, and having thirty thousand pounds.

Bel. The fortune, I dare say, no way lessened the force of her attractions.

Lees. I am above dissimulation—it really did not.

Bel. Well, Mr Leeson, our families have shewn

such a very strong inclination to come together, that it would really be a pity to disappoint them.

Con. Upon my soul and so it would; though the dread of being forced to have a husband, the young lady tells us, quickened her resolution to marry this gentleman.

Bel. O she had no violence of that kind to apprehend from her family: therefore, Mr Leeson, since you seem as necessary for the girl's happiness as she seems for your's, you shall marry her here in town, with the consent of all her friends, and save yourself the trouble of an expedition to Scotland.

Lees. Can I believe you serious?

Bel. Zounds, Leeson, that air of surprise is a sad reproach! I didn't surprise you when I did a bad action, but I raise your astonishment when I do a good one.

Con. And by my soul, Mr Belville, if you knew how a good action becomes a man, you'd never do a bad one as long as you lived.

Lees. You have given me life and happiness in one day, Mr Belville! however, it is now time you shou'd see your sister; I know you'll be gentle with her, though you have so much reason to condemn her choice, and generously remember, that her elopement proceeded from the great improbability there was of a beggar's ever meeting with the approbation of her family.

Bel. Don't apologize for your circumstances, Leeson: a princess could do no more than make you happy, and if you make her so, you meet her upon terms of the most perfect equality.

Lees. This is a new way of thinking, Mr Belville.

Bel. 'Tis only an honest way of thinking; and I consider my sister a gainer upon the occasion; for a man of your merit is more difficult to be found than a woman of her fortune.

(*Exeunt LEESON and BELVILLE.*)

Con. What's the reason now that I can't skip and laugh and rejoice at this affair? Upon my soul my heart's as full as if I had met with some great misfortune. Well, pleasure in the extreme is certainly a very painful thing: I am really ashamed of these woman's drops, and yet I don't know but that I ought to blush for being ashamed of them, for I am sure nobody's eye ever looks half so well as when it is disfigured by a tear of humanity. *(Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

A Drawing-Room.

Enter BELVILLE.

Bel. Well, happiness is once more mine, and the women are all going in tip-top spirits to the masquerade. Now, Mr Belville, let me have a few words with you: Miss Walsingham, the ripe, the luxurious Miss Walsingham, expects to find you there burning with impatience:—But, my dear friend, after the occurrences of the day, can you be weak enough to plunge into fresh crimes? Can you be base enough to abuse the goodness of that angel your wife; and wicked enough, not only to destroy the innocence which is sheltered beneath your own roof, but to ex-

pose your family perhaps again, to the danger of losing a son, a brother, a father, and a husband? The possession of the three graces is surely too poor a recompence for the folly you must commit, for the shame you must feel, and the consequence you must hazard. Upon my soul, if I struggle a little longer, I shall rise in my own opinion, and be less a rascal than I think myself:—Ay, but the object is bewitching;—the matter will be an eternal secret—and if it is known that I sneak in this pitiful manner from a fine woman, when the whole elysium of her person solicits me:—Well, and am I afraid the world should know that I have shrunk from an infamous action?—A thousand blessings on you, dear conscience, for that one argument;—I shall be an honest man after all—Suppose, however, that I gave her the meeting? That's dangerous,—that's dangerous;—and I am so little accustomed to do what is right, that I shall certainly do what is wrong, the moment I am in the way of temptation. Come, Belville, your resolution is not so very slender a dependence, and you owe Miss Walsingham reparation for the injury which you have done her principles. I'll give her the meeting—I'll take her to the house I intended—I'll—Zounds! what a fool I have been all this time, to look for precarious satisfaction in vice, when there is such exquisite pleasure to be found at a certainty in virtue. (*Exit.*

Enter LADY RACHEL and MRS BELVILLE.

Lady Rach. For mirth sake don't let him see us: There has been a warm debate between his passion and his conscience.

Mrs Bel. And the latter is the conqueror, my life for it.

Lady Rach. Dear Mrs Belville, you are the best of women, and ought to have the best of husbands.

Mrs Bel. I have the best of husbands.

Lady Rach. I have not time to dispute the matter

with you now ; but I shall put you into my comedy to teach wives, that the best receipt for matrimonial happiness is to be deaf, dumb, and blind.

Mrs Bel. Poh ! poh ! you are a satirist, Lady Rachel—But we are losing time : shou'dn't we put on our dresses, and prepare for the grand scene ?

Lady Rach. Don't you tremble at the trial ?

Mrs Bel. Not in the least, I am sure my heart has no occasion.

Lady Rach. Have you let Miss Walsingham into our little plot ?

Mrs Bel. You know she could not be insensible of Mr Belville's design upon herself, and it is no farther than that design we have any thing to carry into execution.

Lady Rach. Well, she may serve to facilitate the matter, and therefore I am not sorry that you have trusted her.

Mrs Bel. We shall be too late, and then what signifies all your fine plotting.

Lady Rach. Is it not a little pang of jealousy that wou'd fain now quicken our motions ?

Mrs Bel. No, Lady Rachel, it is a certainty of my husband's love and generosity that makes me wish to come to the trial. I would not exchange my confidence in his affections for all the mines of Peru ; so nothing you can say will make me miserable.

Lady Rach. You are a most unaccountable woman ; so away with you. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

*Continued.**Enter SPRUCE and GHASTLY.*

Spruce. Why, Ghastly, the old General your master is a greater fool than I ever thought he was: He wants to marry Miss Walsingham!

Ghast. Mrs Tempest suspected that there was something going forward, by all his hugger-mugger consulting with Mr Torrington; and so set me on to listen.

Spruce. She's a good friend of your's, and that thing she made the General give you the other day in the hospital, is, I suppose, a snug hundred a year?

Ghast. Better than two: I wash for near four thousand people: there was a major of horse who put in for it, and pleaded a large family.

Spruce. With long services, I suppose.

Ghast. Yes, but Mrs Tempest insisted upon my long services; so the major was set aside—However, to keep the thing from the damned newspapers, I fancy he will succeed the barber, who died last night, poor woman, of a lying-in fever, after being brought to bed of three children.—Places in public institutions—

Spruce. Are often sweetly disposed: I think of asking Belville for something one of these days.

Ghast. He has great interest.

Spruce. I might be a justice of peace, if I pleased, and in a shabby neighbourhood, where the mere swearing would bring in something tolerable; but

there are so many strange people let into the commission now-a-days, that I shou'dn't like to have my name in the list.

Ghast. You are right.

Spruce. No, no, I leave that to paltry tradesmen, and shall think of some little sinecure, or a small pension on the Irish establishment.

Ghast. Well, success attend you. I must hobble home as fast as I can, to know if Mrs Tempest has any orders. O, there's a rare storm brewing for our old goat of a General.

Spruce. When shall we crack a bottle together ?

Ghast. O, I sha'n't touch a glass of claret these three weeks; for last night I gave nature a little fillip with a drunken bout, according to the doctor's directions; I have entirely left off bread, and I am in great hopes that I shall get rid of my gout by these means, especially if I can learn to eat my meat quite raw like a cannibal.

Spruce. Ha, ha, ha!

Ghast. Look at me, Spruce, I was once as likely a young fellow as any under ground in the whole parish of St James's;—but waiting on the General so many years—

Spruce. Ay, and following his example, Ghastly.

Ghast. 'Tis too true: has reduced me to what you see. These miserable spindles wou'd do very well for a lord or a duke, Spruce; but they are a sad disgrace to a poor valet de chambre. (*Exit.*)

Spruce. Well, I don't believe there's a gentleman's gentleman, within the weekly bills, who joins a prudent solicitude for the main chance to a strict care of his constitution better than myself. I have a little girl who stands me in about three guineas a week; I never bet more than a pound upon a rubber of whist; I always sleep with my head very warm; and swallow a new-laid egg every morning with my chocolate.

(*Exit.*)

SCENE III.

The Street.

Two Chairs cross the Stage, knock at a door, and set down BELVILLE and a Lady.

Bel. This way, my dear creature ! *(Exeunt.*

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE, CAPTAIN SAVAGE, and TORRINGTON.

Capt. There ! there they go in : You see the place is quite convenient, not twenty yards from the masquerade.

Gen. How closely the fellow sticks to her !

Tor. Like the great seal to the peerage patent of a chancellor. But, gentlemen, we have still no more than proof presumptive :—Where is the ocular demonstration which we were to have ?

Capt. I'll swear to the blue domino ; 'tis a very remarkable one, and so is Belville's.

Tor. You wou'd have rare custom among the Newgate solicitors, if you'd venture an oath upon the identity of the party under it.

Gen. 'Tis the very size and shape of Miss Walsingham.

Tor. And yet I have a strange notion that there is a trifling *alibi* in this case.

Gen. It would be a damned affair if we shou'd be countermined.

Capt. O, follow me, here's the door, left luckily open, and I'll soon clear up the matter beyond a question. *(Enters the house.*

Tor. Why your son is mad, General. This must produce a deadly breach with Belville. For heaven's sake, let's go in, and prevent any excesses of his rashness.

Gen. By all means, or the poor fellow's generous anxiety on my account may be productive of very fatal consequences. *(Exeunt.)*

SCENE IV.

An Apartment.

BELVILLE *unmasked*, and a Lady in a blue domino *masked*.

Bel, My dear Miss Walsingham, we are now perfectly safe; yet I will by no means entrust you to unmask, because I am convinced, from the propriety with which you repulsed my addresses this morning, that you intend the present interview should make me still more deeply sensible of my presumption.—I never lied so awkwardly in all my life; if it was to make her comply, I should be at no loss for language. *(Aside.)* The situation in which I must appear before you, madam, is certainly a very humiliating one; but I am persuaded that your generosity will be gratified to hear, that I have bid an everlasting adieu to my profligacy, and am now only alive to the virtues of Mrs Belville.—She won't speak—I don't wonder at it; for, brazen as I am myself, if I met so mortifying a rejection, I should be cursedly out of countenance. *(Aside.)*

Capt. (Behind.) I will go in.

Gen. (Behind.) I command you to desist.

Tor. (Behind.) This will be an affair for the Old Bailey. *(The noise grows more violent, and continues.)*

Bel. Why, what the devil is all this?—Don't be alarmed, Miss Walsingham, be assured I'll protect you at the hazard of my life;—step into this closet,—you sha'n't be discovered, depend upon it; *(She goes in.)* and now to find out the cause of this confusion. *(Unlocks the door.)*

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE, CAPTAIN SAVAGE, and TORRINGTON.

Bel. Savage! what is the meaning of this strange behaviour?

Capt. Where is Miss Walsingham?

Bel. So, then, sir, this is a premeditated scheme, for which I am obliged to your friendship.

Capt. Where's Miss Walsingham, sir?

Gen. Dear Belville, he is out of his senses; this storm was entirely against my orders.

Tor. If he proceeds much longer in these vagaries, we must amuse him with a commission of lunacy.

Bel. This is neither a time nor place for argument, Mr Torrington; but as you and the General seem to be in the possession of your senses, I shall be glad if you'll take this very friendly gentleman away; and depend upon it I sha'n't die in his debt for the present obligation.

Capt. And depend upon it, sir, pay the obligation when you will, I sha'n't stir till I see Miss Walsingham.—Look'e, Belville, there are secret reasons for my behaving in this manner; reasons which you yourself will approve, when you know them;—my father here—

Gen. Disavows your conduct in every particular, and would rejoice to see you at the halberds.

Tor. And for my part, I told him previously 'twas a downright burglary.

Bel. Well, gentlemen, let your different motives

for breaking in upon me in this agreeable manner, be what they may, I don't see that I am less annoyed by my friends than my enemy; I must therefore again request that you will all walk down stairs.

Capt. I'll first walk into this room.

Bel. Really, I think you will not.

Gen. What phrenzy possesses the fellow to urge this matter farther?

Capt. While there's a single doubt she triumphs over justice; (*Drawing.*) I will go into that room.

Bel. Then you must make your way through me.

Enter MRS BELVILLE.

Mrs Bel. Ah!

Capt. There, I knew she was in the room:—there's the blue domino.

Gen. Put up your sword, if you don't desire to be cashiered from my favour for ever.

Bel. Why wou'd you come out, madam? But you have nothing to apprehend.

Capt. Pray, madam, will you have the goodness to unmask?

Bel. She sha'n't unmask.

Capt. I say she shall.

Bel. I say she shall not.

Mrs Bel. Pray let me oblige the gentlemen!

(*Unmasks.*)

Capt. Death and destruction, here's a discovery!

Gen and Tor. Mrs Belville!

Mrs Bel. Yes, Mrs Belville, gentlemen: Is conjugal fidelity so very terrible a thing now-a-days that a man is to suffer death for being found in company with his own wife?

Bel. My love, this is a surprise, indeed; but it is a most agreeable one, since you find me really ashamed of my former follies, and cannot now doubt the sincerity of my reformation.

Mrs Bel. I am too happy! this single moment wou'd overpay a whole life of anxiety.

Bel. Where shall I attend you? Will you return to the masquerade?

Mrs Bel. O no! Lady Rachel and Miss Walsingham are by this time at our house, with Mr Leeson, and the Irish gentleman whom you pressed into our party, impatiently expecting the result of this adventure.

Bel. Give me leave to conduct you home then from this scene of confusion. To-morrow, Captain Savage, I shall beg the favour of your explanation; (*Aside to him as he goes out.*) Kind gentlemen, your most humble servant.

Mrs Bel. And when you next disturb a *tête à tête*, for pity to a poor wife, don't let it be so very uncus-tomary a party as the matrimonial one.

(*Exeunt BEL. and MRS BEL.*)

Gen. (*To the Capt.*) So, sir, you have led us upon a blessed expedition here.

Tor. Now don't you think that if your courts of honour, like our courts of law, searched a little minutely into evidence, it wou'd be equally to the credit of their understandings?

Capt. Though I am covered with confusion at my mistake (for you see Belville was mistaken as well as myself,) I am overjoyed at this discovery of Miss Walsingham's innocence.

Gen. I should exult in it too, with a *feu de joy*, if it didn't now shew the impossibility of her ever being Mrs Savage.

Capt. Dear sir, why should you think that an impossibility? Though some mistakes have occurred in consequence, I suppose, of Mrs Belville's little plot upon her husband, I dare say Miss Walsingham may yet be prevailed upon to come into our family.

Tor. Take care of a new error in your proceedings, young gentleman.

Gen. Ay, another defeat would make us completely despicable.

Capt. Sir, I'll forfeit my life, if she does not consent to the marriage this very night.

Gen. Only bring this matter to bear, and I'll forgive you every thing.

Tor. The captain should be informed, I think, general, that she declined it peremptorily this evening.

Gen. Ay, do you hear that, Horace?

Capt. I am not at all surprised at it, considering the general misconception we laboured under. But I'll immediately to Belville's, explain the whole mystery, and conclude every thing to your satisfaction.

[*Exit.*

Gen. So, Torrington, we shall be able to take the field again, you see.

Tor. But how, in the name of wonder, has your son found out your intention of marrying Miss Walsingham? I looked upon myself as the only person acquainted with the secret.

Gen. That thought has marched itself two or three times to my own reflection. For though I gave him some distant hints of the affair, I took particular care to keep behind the works of a proper circumspection.

Tor. O, if you gave him any hints at all, I am not surprised at his discovering every thing.

Gen. I shall be all impatience till I hear of his interview with Miss Walsingham: suppose, my dear friend, we went to Belville's, 'tis but in the next street, and we shall be there in the lighting of a match.

Tor. Really this is a pretty business for a man of my age and profession, trot here, trot there. But, as I have been weak enough to make myself a kind of party in the cause, I own that I have curiosity enough to be anxious about the determination.

Gen. Come along, my old boy, and remember the old song, "Servile spirits," &c.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

BELVILLE'S.

Enter CAPTAIN SAVAGE and MISS WALINGHAM.

Capt. Nay, but, my dearest Miss Walsingham, the extenuation of my own conduct to Belville made it absolutely necessary for me to discover my engagements with you; and, as happiness is now so fortunately in our reach, I flatter myself you will be prevailed upon to forgive an error, which proceeded only from an extravagance of love.

Miss Wal. To think me capable of such an action, Captain Savage! I am terrified at the idea of a union with you; and it is better for a woman, at any time, to sacrifice an insolent lover, than to accept of a suspicious husband.

Capt. In the happiest unions, my dearest creature, there must be always something to overlook on both sides.

Miss Wal. Very civil, truly.

Capt. Pardon me, my life, for this frankness; and recollect, that if the lover has through misconception been unhappily guilty, he brings a husband altogether reformed to your hands.

Miss Wal. Well, I see I must forgive you at last, so I may as well make a merit of necessity, you provoking creature.

Capt. And may I hope, indeed, for the blessing of this hand?

Miss Wal. Why, you wretch, would you have me

force it upon you? I think, after what I have said, a soldier might have ventured to take it without farther ceremony.

Capt. Angelic creature! thus I seize it as my lawful prize.

Miss Wal. Well, but now you have obtained this inestimable prize, Captain, give me again leave to ask if you have had a certain explanation with the General?

Capt. How can you doubt it?

Miss Wal. And he is really impatient for our marriage?

Capt. 'Tis incredible how earnest he is.

Miss Wal. What, did he tell you of his interview with me this evening when he brought Mr Torrington?

Capt. He did.

Miss Wal. O, then, I can have no doubt.

Capt. If a shadow of doubt remains, here he comes to remove it.—Joy, my dear sir! joy a thousand times.

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE and TORRINGTON.

Gen. What, my dear boy, have you carried the day?

Miss Wal. I have been weak enough to indulge him with a victory, indeed, General.

Gen. *None but the brave, none but the brave, &c.*

[Singing.]

Tor. I congratulate you heartily on this decree, General.

Gen. This had nearly proved a day of disappointment, but the stars have fortunately turned it in my favour, and now I reap the rich reward of my victory. (*Salutes her.*)

Capt. And here I take her from you, as the greatest good which heaven can send me.

Miss Wal. O, Captain !

Gen. You take her as the greatest good which heaven can send you, sirrah ? I take her as the greatest good which heaven can send *me* : and now what have you to say to her ?

Miss Wal. General Savage !

Tor. Here will be a fresh injunction to stop proceedings.

Miss Wal. Are you never to have done with mistakes ?

Gen. What mistakes can have happened now, my sweetest ? you delivered up your dear hand to me this moment.

Miss Wal. True, sir ; but I thought you were going to bestow my dear hand upon this dear gentleman.

Gen. How ! that dear gentleman !

Capt. I am thunder-struck !

Tor. General—*None but the brave, &c.* [Sings.

Gen. So the covertway is cleared at last ; and you have imagined that I was all along negotiating for this fellow, when I was gravely soliciting for myself ?

Miss Wal. No other idea, sir, ever once entered my imagination.

Tor. General—*Noble minds should ne'er despair, &c.* [Sings.

Gen. Zounds ! here's all the company pouring upon us in full gallop, and I shall be the laughing-stock of the whole town.

Enter BELVILLE, MRS BELVILLE, LADY RACHEL, LEESON, and CONOLLY.

Bel. Well, General, we have left you a long time together. Shall I give you joy ?

Gen. No ; wish me demolished in the fortifications of Dunkirk.

Mrs Bel. What's the matter ?

Lady Rach. The General appears disconcerted.

Lees. The gentleman looks as if he had fought a hard battle.

Con. Ay, and gained nothing but a defeat, my dear.

Tor. I'll shew cause for his behaviour.

Gen. Death and damnation ! not for the world ! I am taken by surprise here ; let me consider a moment how to cut my way through the enemy.

Miss Wal. How cou'd you be deceived in this manner !

[*To the Captain.*

Lady Rach. O, Mr Torrington, we are much obliged to you ; you have been in town ever since last night, and only see us now by accident.

Tor. I have been very busy, madam ; but you look sadly, very sadly indeed ! your old disorder the jaundice, I suppose, has been very troublesome to you ?

Lady Rach. Sir, you have a very extraordinary mode of complimenting your acquaintance.

Con. I don't believe for all that, that there's a word of a lie in the truth he speaks.

[*Aside.*

Lees. Mr Torrington, your most obedient—You received my letter, I hope ?

Tor. What, my young barrister !—Have you any more traders from Dantzick to be naturalized ?

Con. Let us only speak to you in private, and we'll there clear up the affair before the whole company.

Tor. [*Speaking apart to LEES. and CON.*] This gentleman's letter has already cleared it up to my entire satisfaction ; and I don't know whether I am most pleased with his wit, or charmed with his probity.—However, Mr Leeson, I used the bailiffs sadly.—Bailiffs are generally sad fellows, to be sure ; but we must love justice for our own sakes.

Lees. Unquestionably, sir, and they shall be amply recompensed for the merit of their sufferings.

Con. And the merit of suffering, I fancy, is the only merit that is ever likely to fall to the share of a sheriff's officer.

Tor. One word—one word more, Mr Leeson—I have inquired your character, and like it—like it much.—Forgive the forwardness of an old man.—You must not want money—you must not indeed—

Lees. Sir—

Tor. Pray, don't be offended—I mean to give my friends but little trouble about my affairs when I am gone.—I love to see the people happy that my fortune is to make so; and shall think it a treason against humanity, to leave a shilling more than the bare expences of my funeral.—Breakfast with me in the morning.

Lees. You overwhelm me with this generosity; but a happy revolution in my fortunes, which you will soon know, renders it wholly unnecessary for me to trouble you.

Con. [*Wiping his eyes.*] Upon my soul, this is a most worthy old crater—to be his own executor. If I was to live any long time among such people, they'd soon be the death of me with their very goodness.

Mrs Bel. Miss Walsingham, Captain Savage has been telling Mr Belville and me of a very extraordinary mistake.

Miss Wal. 'Tis very strange indeed, mistake on mistake.

Bel. 'Tis no way strange to find every body properly struck with the merit of Miss Walsingham.

Miss Wal. A compliment from you now, Mr Belville, is really worth accepting.

Gen. If I thought the affair cou'd be kept a secret, by making the town over to my son, since I am utterly shut out myself—

Capt. He seems exceedingly embarrassed.

Gen. If I thought that,—why, mortified as I must be in giving it up, I think I could resolve upon the manœuvre, to save myself from universal ridicule:

but it can't be,—it can't be; and I only double my own disappointment in rewarding the disobedience of the rascal who has supplanted me. There!—there! they are all talking of it, all laughing at me, and I shall run mad.

Mrs Temp. [*Behind.*] I say, you feather-headed puppy, he is in this house; my own servant saw him come in, and I will not stir till I find him.

Gen. She here!—then deliberation is over, and I am entirely blown up.

Lady Rach. I'll take notes of this affair.

Enter MRS TEMPEST.

Mrs Temp. Mighty well, sir. So you are in love it seems;—and you want to be married it seems?

Lees. My blessed aunt!—O how proud I am of the relation!

Gen. Dear Bab, give me quarter before all this company.

Mrs Temp. You are in love, you old fool, are you? and you want to marry Miss Walsingham, indeed!

Con. I never heard a pleasanter-spoken gentlewoman—O hone, if I had the taming of her, she shou'd never be abusive, without keeping a civil tongue in her head.

Mrs Temp. Well, sir, and when is the happy day to be fixed?

Bel. What the devil, is this true, General?

Gen. True—Can you believe such an absurdity?

Mrs Temp. Why, will you deny, you miserable old mummy, that you made proposals of marriage to her?

Gen. Yes I do—no I don't—proposals of marriage!

Miss Wal. In favour of your son—I'll help him out a little. [*Aside.*]

Gen. Yes, in favour of my son—What the devil shall I do?

Mrs Bel. Shall I take a lesson from this lady, Mr Belville? Perhaps, if the women of virtue were to

pluck up a little spirit, they might be soon as well treated as kept mistresses.

Mrs Temp. Hark'e, General Savage, I believe you assert a falsehood ; but if you speak the truth, give your son this moment to Miss Walsingham, and let me be fairly rid of my rival.

Gen. My son ! Miss Walsingham !—Miss Walsingham, my son !

Bel. It will do, Horace ; it will do.

Mrs Temp. No prevarications, General Savage ; do what I bid you instantly, or by all the wrongs of an enraged woman, I'll so expose you—

Con. What a fine fellow this is to have the command of an army !

Gen. If Miss Walsingham can be prevailed upon.

Tor. O, she'll oblige you readily—but you must settle a good fortune upon your son.

Mrs Temp. That he shall do.

Mrs Bel. Miss Walsingham, my dear—

Miss Wal. I can refuse nothing either to your request, or to the request of the General.

Gen. Oblige me with your hand then, madam : Come here you—come here, Captain. There, there is Miss Walsingham's hand for you.

Con. And as pretty a little fist it is as any in the three kingdoms.

Gen. Torrington shall settle the fortune.

Lees. I give you joy most heartily, madam.

Bel. We all give her joy.

Capt. Mine is beyond the power of expression.

Miss Wal. [*Aside to the company.*] And so is the General's, I believe.

Con. O faith, that may be easily seen by the sweetness of his countenance.

Tor. Well, the cause being now at last determined, I think we may all retire from the court.

Gen. And without any great credit, I fear, to the General.

Con. By my soul, you may say that.

Mrs Temp. Do you murmur, sir?—Come this moment home with me.

Gen. I'll go any where to hide this miserable head of mine: What a damned campaign have I made of it! [*Exeunt Gen. and MRS TEMP.*]

Con. Upon my soul, if I was in the General's place, I'd divide the house with this devil; I'd keep within doors myself, and make her take the outside.

Lady Rach. Here's more food for a comedy.

Lees. So there is, madam; and Mr Torrington, to whose goodness I am infinitely obliged, could tell you some diverting anecdotes, that would enrich a comedy considerably.

Con. Ay, faith, and a tragedy too.

Tor. I can tell nothing but what will redound to the credit of your character, young man.

Bel. The day has been a busy one, thanks to the communicative disposition of the Captain.

Mrs Bel. And the evening should be cheerful.

Bel. I sha'n't therefore part with one of you, till we have had a hearty laugh at our general adventures.

Miss Wal. They have been very whimsical indeed; yet if represented on the stage, I hope they would be found not only entertaining, but instructive.

Lady Rach. Instructive! why the modern critics say that the only business of comedy is to make people laugh.

Bel. That is degrading the dignity of letters exceedingly, as well as lessening the utility of the stage.—A good comedy is a capital effort of genius, and should therefore be directed to the noblest purposes.

Miss Wal. Very true; and unless we learn something while we chuckle, the carpenter who nails a pantomime together will be entitled to more applause than the best comic poet in the kingdom.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

HENRY THE SECOND,
OR
THE FALL OF ROSAMOND.
A
TRAGEDY.
BY
THOMAS HULL.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HENRY II. <i>King of England,</i>	<i>Mr Smith.</i>
PRINCE HENRY,	<i>Mr Wroughton.</i>
CLIFFORD, <i>Father to Rosamond,</i>	<i>Mr Hull.</i>
ABBOT,	<i>Mr Clarke.</i>
SALISBURY,	<i>Mr Gardner.</i>
VERULAM,	<i>Mr R. Smith.</i>
LEICESTER,	<i>Mr Thompson.</i>
QUEEN ELEANOR,	<i>Miss Miller.</i>
ROSAMOND,	<i>Mrs Hartley.</i>
ETHELINDA,	<i>Miss Pearce.</i>

SCENE,—Oxford and Places adjacent.

HENRY THE SECOND.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in SALISBURY's House.

Enter CLIFFORD and SALISBURY.

Clif. Salisbury, no more ; seek not with empty words
To talk down grief like mine ; hadst thou a child,
Whom thy fond heart had dwell'd and doted on,
As mine on Rosamond, and felt'st the pang
Of seeing her devote her matchless beauty
To lawless love, her dignity and virtue
To infamy and shame, thou wou'dst not brook
Vain consolation.

Salis. Judge not I esteem
Thy sufferings light, or think thy pains will yield
To cold philosophy.

Clif. No—Wou'd'st thou ease
The tortured wretch, thou must sit down beside him,
Shed tear for tear, in sympathizing silence;
List to the tale which sorrow loves to tell,
And, by partaking the distressful cause,
Sooth the strong woe that will not be controul'd.

Salis. Give thy full bosom vent, thy friend shall
wait

With patient and participating heart.

Clif. I ask but that; for shou'd'st thou weary lan-
guage,

Ransack the stores of subtle sophistry,
For deepest arguments, my simple answer
Confutes and baffles all—I've lost my child.

Salis. I grant it, lord, and meant alone to stand
A friendly mediator 'twixt thyself
And the o'er-ruling tumults of thy mind.
I dread their violence. Did'st thou not talk
Of vengeance and redress? Whence should they
spring?

Where wou'd'st thou point them? Say, is this a time
To add to Henry's troubles? now, when dark
Intestine feuds and foreign foes combine
To shake his throne and peace?

Clif. Cousin, thou callest
A blush to these old cheeks at the bare thought
Of what thy words imply. Think'st thou I mean,
Had this weak arm the highest power of vengeance,
To stain my native land with civil slaughter?
No, Heaven forefend! nor should a danger reach
My sovereign's sacred life. Were there a wretch
Accursed enough to raise his traitorous arm
'Gainst Henry's breast, Clifford would rush between,
Oppose himself to the assassin's point,
And glory in the death that saved his king.

Salis. My mind's at peace.

Clif. So rest it, noble Salisbury!

Shall I be plain, and tell thee all my weakness?

'Spite of ungrateful Henry's perfidy,

I love him still, I love this royal robber.

In early youth I led him to the field,

Train'd his advent'rous spirit, shared his dangers,

And by his side maintain'd my country's honour,

In many a gallant feat; Oh, hard return!

How hath he paid this love!

Salis. When headlong passions

Mislead him not from his instinctive greatness,

How noble shews he! wisdom, learning, policy,

Inform his mind, and generous honour sways it.

Clif. Where was it fled, that guardian of man's
heart,

When, with insidious arts, in evil hour,

He lured my chaste, my duteous Rosamond

From virtue and obedience? Was she not

All that a parent's fondest wish could form?

In vain her modest grace and diffidence

Bore the dear semblance of her mother's sweetness,

And promised an unsullied length of days.

She's lost, and the bright glories of our line

Are stain'd in her disgrace.

Salis. The love of goodness

Not wholly leaves the breast that error stains,

But oft abides, a wholesome monitor,

To call the miserable culprit back

To its forsaken laws. So may it fare

With her. 'Tis true the king, when in her sight,

Engrosses all her thoughts; but, in her secret

And solitary hours, sad she regrets

Her ruin'd innocence, and mourns that love

Which led her to destroy a father's peace,

And stain the honours of a spotless line.

Clif. To save her from a deeper plunge in guilt
Is all my present purpose; against the king

No other weapons do I wish to use,
But those which best become the manly heart,
Reason and conscience; let him give her back
Stain'd and dishonour'd as the mourner is,
Let him restore her to these aged arms,
I ask no more.

Salis. Unfold thy utmost wish,
And if a friend's assistance may avail,
Command thy kinsman's warmest services.

Clif. Conceal my being here; let not the king
Know Clifford treads these bounds; he must be won
To my discourse, unconscious who I am.
I have devised a means—inquire not now,
But patient aid me, and await the issue.
I have good hopes that all the generous fires,
Which warmed his noble heart, are not extinct;
If so, I may once more embrace my child,
My still dear Rosamond.—Blame not my weakness,
I come not to inflict but banish pain;
To awaken in her breast a just remorse
For her past failings; and entice her steps
To some serene abode, where penitence
And contemplation dwell, and jointly sooth
The contrite sinner's mind with glowing hope
Of Heaven's indulgence, and returning peace.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A retired Grove belonging to the Palace.

Enter PRINCE HENRY and LEICESTER.

Prince. My spirit will not brook it! what avails

The empty name and title of a king,
Without imperial power ? Why with his son
Divide his throne, unless he meant to grant
A share of that supreme authority,
Which only lends stability to greatness
And gives its highest lustre ?—To be caught
With the gay tinsell'd garb of royalty
Befits an idiot only ; let him know
That Henry's son inherits Henry's pride,
And may in time, with daring hand, assume
What now he is debarr'd.

Leices. Your wrongs are great ;
But be not too precipitate and rash,
Lest you therein defeat the means by which
You wish to gain. Beware, the watchful eye
Of curiosity besets our paths ;
Speak not so loud.

Prince. What danger ? Shou'd the king
Himself o'erhear, confront me face to face,
I would not shrink ; mine eye should not abate
Its angry fire, nor my sunk heart recall
The smallest drop of that indignant blood
That paints my glowing cheek ; but I would speak,
Avow, proclaim, and boast my settled purpose.
I have a double cause to urge me on,
A royal mother's wrongs joined to my own.
Do I not see her injured, scorn'd, abandon'd,
For the loose pleasures of a wanton's bed,
His beauteous minion, whom embower'd he keeps
In Woodstock's mazy walks ? Shall he do this
Unnoticed, unreproach'd, yet dare to check
My honest ardour ? He hath yet to learn,
That parent who expects his son to walk
Within the decent pale of rigid duty,
Should keep a heedful watch o'er his own steps,
And by his practice well enforce the doctrine
He means to have him learn.

Leices. Yet check this passion,

And hear the dictates of my cooler mind.
Is not the council here convened this morn,
By Henry's order, to debate the courtesy
Of the French monarch, who even now invites
Thy royal presence to his gallant court,
On friendly visit ?

Prince. Yes—and here the partner
In England's throne waits, till their mighty wisdoms
Shall have determined what his course must be,
And deign to call him in ; waits like a servile
And needy pensioner, that asks a boon.

Leices. Again you lapse into this wild extreme.
Forget a while ambition and revenge,
And court cool wisdom ; act the politician ;
Play to their humours, yield to their decrees ;
Use this French journey, as the happy step
To mount to your desires.—Though here deprived
Of power, in Normandy your half-king title
Enables you to scatter favours round,
Such as shall gain you popular applause,
And win your subjects' hearts—This point obtain'd,
All you can ask is yours ; you may command
Where now you sue, and Henry's self may fear
Your potency, and grant your highest wish.

Prince. By Heaven thou hast inflamed my eager
soul
With bright imaginations of renown,
Of conquest and ambition ; I awhile
Will try to sooth this proudly-swelling heart
Into mild heavings and submissive calms,
For this great purpose.

Leices. To your aims devoted,
I'll privily away, and meet you there ;
Will worm myself into each Norman breast ;
Pour in their greedy ears your early virtues,
Your love of them, their interest and honour ;
Then join in any hardy enterprize

That fore-thought can suggest, and win the palm,
Or die beside thee.

Prince. Generous, gallant friend !
I have not words to thank thee—to my breast
Let me receive the guardian of my glory,
In full assurance that his noble friendship
Shall never be forgot.

Leices. Behold the queen ;
She moves this way.

Prince. I will retire a while ;
I would not meet her, till this hoped departure
Be fix'd irrevocably, lest her fond
Maternal love and softness might prevail
O'er that instinctive yielding in the breast,
Which nature wakens when a mother sues,
And win some promise from my pliant heart,
That I should scorn to break. [Exit,

Leices. What if I try
To win her to our cause ? The frequent wrongs,
Which fire her haughty mind, join'd to affection
For her young Henry, may engage her help
In any scheme that promises revenge.
But soft—the present is no time for that ;
For with her comes that busy meddling Abbot,
That dealer in dark wiles, who rules and guides
The consciences of all who weakly crouch
To his mock sanctity. I will avoid him—
Even now some mischief broods within his mind !
Perhaps toward me ; for he, of late, hath shewn me
Marks of respect and courtesy, wherein
He was not wont to deal. Time only will
Explain the object of his present aims,
For in his Proteus-face, or even his words,
No smallest trace of what employs his thoughts
Can ever be descry'd. [Exit,

Enter QUEEN and ABBOT.

Queen. Tell me no more
Of long protracted schemes and tedious wiles ;

My soul is all impatience: Talk to me
Of vengeance, speedy vengeance.

Abbot. What can be
Devised to punish, pain, and mortify,
Beyond what is enjoin'd on Henry's head?
Though distant from the venerable shrine
Where martyr'd Becket's sacred blood was spill'd,
Is he exempt from penance? Doth not here
Our careful mother-church pursue her foe?
Is he not nightly doom'd to tread the lone
And solemn isles of Ida's holy house,
In deep atonement for the barbarous fall
Of that dear murder'd saint?

Queen. And what atones
For Eleanor's loud wrongs, her murder'd peace?
Will all the penances e'er yet devised
By dronish priests relieve my tortured heart?
Will they recall my Henry's truant love,
Or blast the charms of that deluding witch,
Who lures him from me? This is the redress
Which Eleanor demands—this the revenge
Alone which she can condescend to take.

Abbot. Nor is this past my hope to purchase for you:
My thoughts, devote to you and your repose,
Continually labour for your good.
Alas! you know not, mighty queen, the sighs
My heart has heaved, the tears mine eyes have shed,
For your injurious treatment; and, even now,
Would you but bid your just resentment cool,
I think the wish'd occasion is at hand,
That gratifies your most enlarged desire.

Queen. Thy words are balsam to my wounded
peace.

Go on, go on; dwell on this pleasing strain,
And I will worship thee.

Abbot. Is not the council
Convened by Henry? Do they not decree
Your darling son shall strait for France?

Queen. Ay, there
Again is England's queen insulted, mock'd—
Have I no right of choice? Shall the dear boy,
Whose noble spirit feels his mother's wrongs,
Shall he be banish'd from me, torn away,
My only comforter?

Abbot. He must not go.
You must prevent it—practise every art;
Nay, bid your pride and fierce resentment bend
To soft request and humblest supplication,
Ere suffer his departure.

Queen. Tell me, father,
How this is to be done? Canst thou speak peace
To the tumultuous bosom of the deep,
When the loud tempest tears it? Can I meet
With patient meekness my oppressor's sight?
Wear an apparent calmness in my face,
While heaving anguish struggles in my mind?
It will not be.

Abbot. There are no other means.
What though the council urge state policy,
And public good, for their consent herein,
Their inward aim is to oblige the king,
Who labours this great point. And what's his drift?
No courteous scheme, to please his brother France,
But merely to remove the gallant prince.

Queen. Say'st thou?

Abbot. He fears a rival in the hearts
Of discontented subjects; the brave youth,
With speech undaunted, that disdains disguise,
Hath freely spoke your wrongs: Hence jealousy
Broods in the king, lest your aspiring son
May prove, in time, a bane to his pursuits,
In wanton dalliance and illicit love.

Queen. Is this the end of all his boasted care
For my son's weal, his happiness and honour?
This the great cause his brother France must see
The all-praised heir of England's mighty throne?

O, Henry ! whither is thy greatness fled ?
 Is thy bold pride, thy majesty of heart,
 Sunk in low stratagems and mean deceits ?
 So will it ever be, when perfidy
 Pollutes the soul : the sense of honour flies,
 And fraud and meanness fill the vacant seat.

Abbot. Lose not the precious hours in useless reasonings ;

Speed to the presence ; seize the first fair moment :
 Hang on his garment, clasp his stubborn knees ;
 Foil art with art, and practise every means
 To win the king from this abhorr'd design.

Queen. I go ; howe'er ill-suited to the task,
 I will essay it.—Stoop, exalted heart,
 A moment stoop ; and, tongue, learn thou a new,
 An unbecoming lesson ; let the cause,
 The noble motive, consecrate the means.
 Remember, Eleanor, thou fall'st a while,
 To rise more glorious ; to record thy name
 Amid the fairest legends of renown,
 A brave avenger of thy sex's wrongs. [Exit.]

Abbot. Go, shallow woman ! thy impatient soul,
 That mounts to frenzy at each slight surmise
 Of injury, makes thee a precious tool
 For deep-laid policy to work withal.
 The prince must here abide—his tow'ring pride,
 And Leicester's hot and enterprising genius,
 Assisted by my subtle aid, may raise
 A storm, that shall destroy this haughty king,
 This poison to our cause and holy order.
 Henry, thou knowest not what a foe thou hast
 In this unmitigable breast—my soul
 Abhors thee, and will never know repose,
 Till thou hast fallen a victim to my rage.
 The greatest noblest cause inspires my deeds !
 Look down, oh, sainted Becket ! with delight,
 On thy true servant ! let thy blessed spirit
 Assist my purpose, while I seek revenge

On him who dared insult our holy faith,
By instigating sacrilegious hands
With thy dear blood to stain our hallow'd shrine !
[*Exit.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Palace.

Enter the KING and VERULAM.

King. True, Verulam, and it must be thy care
To check this growing pride, which mounts so fast,
And, like the forward sapling, boldly strives
To emulate the lofty cedar's height,
Which long hath tower'd, in unrivall'd strength,
The glory of the wood.

Ver. That zeal and love,
Which hitherto hath won my master's confidence,
Long as the life-blood warms this aged heart,
Shall be employ'd to serve him : but this asks
The nicest caution ; soft advice must sooth
His headstrong spirit, that, on the least surmise
Of an usurp'd authority, would start
Aside, indignant of controul.

King. To thee,
Thy love and prudence, we confide the whole;
Thy polish'd sense, thy knowledge of mankind,
And long experience, render thee most fit
For this great task.

Ver. The time of his departure,
Is it yet fixed?

King. On our decree alone
That point depends; he shall with speed away;
These rude commotions, that assail us round,
May call us from our realm; should it prove so,
He must not here remain; his stay were fatal.

Ver. Not so, I hope, my liege.

King. Prudence enjoins
Our strictest caution. What his own ambition
Might of itself attempt, we cannot say;
But there's a farther danger to be feared.

Ver. His virtues will defend him from such deeds
As honour and obedience must alike
Condemn; and he has virtues which, I trust,
Will cast a lustre o'er his rising years,
When the slight indiscretions of his youth
Are buried in oblivion.

King. I trust so too;
Yet, Verulam, where splendid virtues grow
Great errors also shoot; his time of life
Is now in that capricious, wavering state,
When the soft bosom is susceptible
Of every new impression; his colleague,
(From whom we wish him sunder'd) subtle Leicester,
Is ever at his ear, watchful to seize
The unguarded moment of the youthful heart,
When dark insinuations may prevail
Upon his ductile mind. Be thou in readiness,
On our first notice.

Ver. This important point,
Which waited only, what this morn hath given,

The council's sanction, hath been long debated.
I am prepared, my liege.

King. Behold our son !

Enter the PRINCE.

Henry, the council, zealous for thy welfare,
The ripe improvement of thy growing virtues,
And the successive glories of our line,
Have by their voices sanctified our will,
In thy departure hence. Go, reap that profit
Which the discerning and ingenious mind
Gains from new climes ; that knowledge of the world,
Of laws, of customs, policy, and states,
Which observation yields alone, and books
And learned guides imperfectly convey.

Prince. I thank my father's love ; the council
wisely

Bend to thy will ; they but allot what else
Had been demanded by the future heir
And present partner in the imperial seat.
My glowing youth and kindling spirit scorn
To live coop'd up within one scanty bound :
Would life permit, it were delight to trace
Each scepter'd region of the peopled world ;
To mark, compare, define their various modes,
And glean the wisdom that results from all.

King. Blest in the inheritance of England's throne,
This ardour well befits thee. Go, my Henry,
Visit our brother France ; there shines a star
Of this rich diadem ; let the bright dawn
Of thy young virtues glitter in their eyes ;
Those virtues which shall grace this glorious isle,
When we are low in dust.

Prince. And shew a heart
Prepared to vindicate each royal due
With the last drop that warms its swelling veins.

King. Spoke with a free-born spirit—Yet beware.
Be not impetuous to grasp at power,

Nor use it, when obtain'd, beyond the limits
 Of reason and uprightness ; in the monarch
 Do not forget the man. This honest lord,
 An able counsellor and steady friend,
 We make companion of thy expedition ;
 Receive him, Henry, from thy father's hand,
 Worthy thy friendship, wear him near thy heart ;
 And should some hasty warmth mislead thy youth,
 Be his white hairs the reverend monitor,
 To warn thee back to the neglected path,
 From which thy steps had stray'd.

Prince. I love his virtues,
 And thus receive the man my sire esteems.
[Embraces VERULAM.

Enter the QUEEN.

Queen. Must I then lose him ? Is he not my son ?
 Or has a mother's tongue no right to plead
 In her own sufferings ? Oh, my lord, my Henry,
 Stand thou between thy wife, and the hard sentence
 Of men, who feel not the soft ties of nature,
 And give me back my boy.

King. Madam, forbear !
 Parental feelings in my bosom sway
 Strong as in thine. Is he not lost alike
 To Henry as to Eleanor ? Subdue
 This unbecoming weakness, that prefers
 Self-satisfaction to the public weal.
 He must away.

Queen. Alas ! there was a time
 When Henry's speech had falter'd o'er and o'er,
 Ere he had utter'd, with determined breath,
 So harsh a sentence. Is that time forgot ?
 —Nay, turn not from me, Henry ! doth thy heart
 Shame to avow the guests it harbour'd once,
 Fond love and gentle pity ?

Prince. Cease, my mother,
 Oh, cease to interrupt my course of glory ;

I go but for a season, to return
More worthy thy endearments.

Queen. Art thou, too,
A traitor to my peace? And dost thou wish
'To fly a mother's arms? To leave her here,
Helpless and unprotected! Oh, my son!
Oppose not thou my wish, but rather join
To melt a father's heart.

King. 'Twere useless, madam;
Think who thy husband is, and what his ties.
How light, how wavering must he appear
In public eyes, should he abjure the point
He hath just labour'd! Recollect thyself—
Thou canst not wish him so to slight the claims
Of wisdom and of honour.

Queen. Nor the claims,
The softening duties of domestic life;
The claims of happiness, of inward peace,
Which long my heart hath sigh'd for.

King. Eleanor,
Once more, remember who we are; a king,
That will not brook to be arraign'd and school'd
For petty indiscretions; Henry judges
His own misdoings, and the chastisement
Must be inflicted by his conscious mind,
Not the bold railings of another's tongue.

Queen. I will be mild, be patient, be advised
I do recall my words, revoke each free,
Each hasty breath of my unguarded speech,
Which hath offended thee; henceforth I bend
My temper to thy will, thy nicest wish,
So I may keep my son.

King. No more—thou askest
What cannot be.

Queen. Thus lowly on my knee
Will I turn suppliant for him.

King. Oh, forbear!

That posture ill becomes us both. I grieve
Thou shou'd'st be so importunate, for what
We must not, cannot, will not grant.

Queen. For this

Have I debased myself? Hath England's queen
Bent lowly to the earth, to be denied
A suit the mother had a right to claim?
My heart swells high, indignant of the meanness,
And scorns itself for such servility.

King. Prefer a proper suit, thou canst not ask
What Henry shall refuse.

Queen. Oh no! thy grants,
Thy kind consenting smiles, thy soothing accents,
Thy love, thy faith, are all withdrawn from Eleanor,
And given to another; conscious shame
O'erpowers me, while I own they once were dear;
But I will now forget them, rase them out
From my officious memory, which hath dared
To call them back to my insulted heart.

King. Well doth this railing, which thy fury promised,
Warn us to part; our kindness meant to give
Some days indulgence to the mother's feelings.

Queen. I scorn both that and thee.

Prince. [*Aside.*] My bosom swells,
Impatient of her wrongs—down, down, a while,
The time—the time will come—

King. Lord Verulam,
Prepare thee, on the instant; he shall hence
Before yon sun decline. If thou hast aught
Of love or duty for thy mother's ear,
Thou hast free license, Henry, to employ
The present moments in that pious office:
Yet take good heed—let not a woman's weakness
Melt thy resolves, and tempt thee to forget
The debt thou ow'st thy country and thy king.

(Exit with VERULAM.)

Prince. Restrain those precious drops, my dearest mother,

That trembling stand in thy swoll'n eyes, and shew
Like the full bubblings on the fountain's brim,
Pressing to pass their bounds ; abate this grief,
And bid thy bosom rest.

Queen. If thou behold'st
One tear disgrace mine eye, fierce indignation,
Not grief, has call'd it forth—Away, away—
Seem not solicitous about a cause
That pains thee not ; thou art no more a son,
No more a comfort to thy mother's woe.

Prince. Oh, by the hopes I have of future fame,
I do not merit these ungentle terms.
Revoke thy words—resume those gentle strains
Which wont to fall upon thy Henry's ear,
And nature's feelings will unsluice my heart
In blood to thy complainings.

Queen. Art not thou
Join'd with the rest, a foe to my repose ?
See'st thou not how thy mother is neglected,
Abandon'd, scorn'd ? Yet thou canst yield obedience
To the decrees of him who thus insults me,
And leave me to my wrongs.

Prince. Can I oppose
A parent's absolute command ? Oh, madam !
Think on my state, how critically nice ;
'Twixt two such urgent claims, how hard to judge !
I must resist a king and father's power,
Or seem neglectful of a mother's woes.
Judge me not so : even while I own the strength
Of this imperial mandate, and prepare
To speed for France, I feel for your afflictions,
Lament your helpless state, and could with joy
Yield up my life to save you from disgrace.

Queen. There spoke my son again ! Oh, my dear
Henry !

If thy soul's truth confirms these precious words,
(And that it does, I trust that starting tear)
Reflect what further must betide my life,
What future hoards of misery and shame
Fate hath to pour upon my wretched head.
My share in the imperial seat, my life,
Even now perchance, is doubtful; all ills threaten;
And when the mighty measure is complete,
When every breast, but thine, is callous toward me,
Must I call out in vain for my defender?
Or must I yield my spirit to my wrongs,
And poorly die beneath them?

Prince. Ere the hour
Arrive, that should behold that dire event,
I would myself redress thee, wou'd excite
My Norman subjects in thy just defence;
Wou'd head them, and oppose my vengeful sword
To each oppressive breast, (save one alone)
To vindicate thy rights.

Enter VERULAM.

Ver. The king, my lord,
Expects you.

Prince. I attend him strait. (*Exit VERULAM.*

Queen. This haste
Hath malice in it.

Prince. Heed it not, my mother;
This journey (if my guess deceive me not)
Shall be the source of good; and on thy head
May all that good descend! Be death my lot,
So I give peace to thee!

Queen. I will not shame
Thy noble spirit with weak womanish tears,
Or one disgraceful sigh. Wilt thou remember
Thy mother's wrongs?

Prince. I will.

Queen. Adieu, begone; (*Exit Prince.*

Glory and bliss be thine ! This gallant boy
(So my prophetic mind forebodes) shall prove
My great avenger, and oppression's scourge.
Perfidious Henry ! thou impell'st my soul
To these extremes ; thou mak'st me what I am.
Hadst thou continued, what I knew thee once,
Endearing, tender, fond—but hence the thought !
Let me shun that, lest my great heart recoil,
And shrink inglorious from its mighty task.
Why comes he not, this abbot ? Oh, 'tis well.

Enter the ABBOT.

Where are thy councils now ? Thy subtle schemes ?
All weak and unavailing—I am lost ;
Sunk in my own esteem ; have meanly bent
Beneath injurious Henry's lordly pride,
And heard my prayers rejected.

Abbot. Hapless queen !

Thy wrongs, indeed, cry loud.

Queen. My son's torn from me.

Abbot. I've heard it all.

Queen. And sat inactive down,
To wait the slow events of time and chance ?

Abbot. Misdeem me not, great queen ; I have re-
volved

Each circumstance with nicest scrutiny ;
Ev'n from this journey, which we wished to thwart,
Much good may be derived ; if the prince breathe
The spirit of his mother——

Queen. Peace ! my policy

Hath flown before thee there ; I have explored
His active spirit ; found him what I hoped ;
For me he sallies forth ; for me returns,
To vindicate my rights.

Abbot. As we cou'd wish ;
And a sharp spur, to forward his designs
In any daring enterprize, is Leicester.

By secret emissaries I have learn'd,
Within this hour, that warm, ambitious friend
Withdraws from court, and speeds to join the prince
In Normandy.

Queen. But what avail these views
Of distant vengeance to my present pangs?
Here I endure the bitterness of woe,
While my curst rival, bane of all my joys,
Dwells in tranquillity and soft content;
In placid ease, within her fairy-bower,
Enjoys my Henry's smiles, his fond endearments,
And vows of love—Ah! due to me alone!

Abbot. That dream shall vanish quickly.

Queen. Say'st thou, father?

Abbot. This very evening, my religious function
Demands me at the fair-one's bower.

Queen. The fiends—

Abbot. To thy sole use the time shall be employ'd.
I will awaken in her tim'rous mind
The dangers of her state; load her with scruples;
Then work her temper to some dang'rous scheme,
That shall undo her favour with the king.

Queen. Its nature—speak——

Abbot. Tax me not, gracious mistress,
To farther explanation—Let me have
The triumph and delight to pour at once
My subtle scheme and its desired success
In thy enraptured ear.

Queen. Enough—go on,
And give me this great comfort; let me hear
The sorceress is sunder'd from his arms.
Work me this miracle—Renown, and wealth,
Unbounded power, and royal patronage
Shall be thy great reward.

(*Exit.*)

Abbot. For wealth and power
I on myself alone depend—vain dreamer!
Who weakly canst suppose I toil for thee.

No, I have further, higher views, beyond
Thy feeble stretch;—the supple Rosamond
Shall prove a greater bane to thy repose
Than thou divin'st; her will I instigate,
With her soft blandishments and witching phrase,
To practise on her lover, till she lure him
To cast thee from thy regal dignities,
Divorce thee from his bed and throne; that done,
The enchantress rises to the vacant seat;
Thus one great point of my desire is gain'd;
Power uncontrollable awaits my nod:
This gewgaw, dazzled with her pomp, shall rule
The king, and I rule all by ruling her. *(Exit.)*

SCENE II.

A Cloister.

Enter CLIFFORD, dressed as an Abbot.

Clif. Thou garb, for holy purposes design'd,
Assist my honest artifice; conceal
My aged form from recollection's trace,
And be my passport to my mourning child,
I'll hallow thee with gratitude and tears.
'This is the awful hour, if right I learn,
When in these solemn isles the royal Henry
Treads, pilgrim-like, these flints, and pours his soul
In sighs for murder'd Becket—Where, alas!
Where are the deep laments, the bitter tears,
Which he should shed for Clifford's ruin'd peace!
He comes, the great disturber of my breast,
Ev'n noble in his guilt!—My heart avows
The fond affection that I bore his youth,

And melts within me.—Let me shun his sight
A moment, to retrieve my sinking spirit. (*Retires.*)

Enter the KING as a pilgrim.

King. Must it be ever thus? Still doom'd to tread
This sullen course, and for a bitter foe?
Becket, though in his grave, torments me still.
And what avails it him, who sleeps unconscious
Of my forced penance? Heart, resume thy strength!
Rouse thee! resist the bigot imposition,
And be thyself again.

Clif. Who thus vents forth (*Advancing.*)
His sore disquiets?

King. What is he who asks?
If yon expiring lamp deceive me not,
Thy garb betokens a religious function.

Clif. Thou judgest well.

King. Inform me, holy guide,
What boot the punishments your laws enjoin;
Self-castigation, balmy sleep renounced,
And lonely wand'rings o'er the rugged flint,
Through the long-closter'd isle?

Clif. Much, pious stranger,
Much they avail: within these silent walls
Chaste contemplation dwells; this hallow'd gloom
Inspires religious musings, ardent prayer,
Which, by their fervid impulse, waft the soul
Of erring man above this vale of weakness,
And teach him to regain, by heavenly aid,
What he had forfeited by human frailty.

King. Divinely spoke! But well may'st thou de-
claim
On their utility, who ne'er hast felt
Their harsh severities—Thou haply canst
Produce the legend of a life unstain'd.

Clif. No—would to heaven I had that boast; but
rank'd
'Mongst error's sons, I share the general weakness;

Too numerous are my faults ; but one, alas !
Beyond the rest I mourn—Spare me a moment,
While I give respite to my swelling grief.

King. Methinks thou hast involved me in a share
Of thy distress. For what art thou enjoind
This rigid duty, similar to mine ?

Who hath inflicted it ?

Clif. Myself—my conscience.

King. Thyself !

Clif. The mind that feels its own demerits,
Needs no infliction from another's tongue.

King. My ears, my soul, are open to thy words—
Give me to know thy crime.

Clif. How can I utter it,
And not sink down with shame ?

King. Let shame betide
The coward heart that will not own its frailties ;
If there's a grace in man superior far
To all beside, it must be that true pride,
That bids him speak his own misdeeds. Proceed.

Clif. I had a friend—the darling of my soul——
He loved, he honoured me—the trade of war
He taught my youth ; in many a hardy field
Have we together fought, asserted England's
And noble Henry's fame, Henry the greatest,
The best of kings !—

King. Oh, painful recollection ! *(Aside.*
Thou once hadst such a friend, ungrateful Henry !

Clif. A length of brotherhood we joy'd together,
Till all its blessedness was spoil'd by me.
He had a daughter, beauteous as the eye
Of fancy e'er imagined—

King. Spare me, spare me—
Oh, bitter tale ! thou hadst a daughter, Clifford !

Clif. I mark'd her for my own ; pour'd the false
tale
Of wily love into her credulous ear,

And won her artless heart.

King. Tumultuous pangs (*Aside.*
Rush like a torrent through my bursting breast ;
My crime, reflected by this stranger's tale,
Glares frightful on me ! Till this hour, I knew not
My trespass was so great—Oh, with what weak,
What partial eyes we view our own misdeeds !
The faults of others are a huge Olympus,
Our own an emmet's nest.

Clif. Heart, heart, be strong ! (*Aside.*
He muses deeply on it—I have hurt (*To the King.*
Thy soft humanity, I fear.—Perchance
Thou hast a daughter, who, like this my victim,
Hath stray'd from virtue's path.

King. Away, away—
I can endure no more—O conscience, conscience, (*Aside.*
With what a wild variety of torments
Thou rushest through my soul !—'Tis all distraction,
And asks some more than human strength of reason,
To save me from despair. (*Exit.*

Clif. Kind Heaven, I thank thee ;
His noble nature is not quite extinguish'd,
He's wounded deep—Oh ! may he but retain
This sense of the sore pangs he brought on me,
Till I have rescued my repentant child,
And all my business in this life is done. (*Exit.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Bower.

ROSAMOND *discovered writing*.—ETHELINDA *attending*.

Ros. It is in vain—my trembling hands deny
Their wonted office—my distracted mind
Revolves a thousand projects to regain
Its vanish'd peace; yet all by turns evade
My feeble efforts: like the lucid vapours,
Which rise successive in a summer's sky,
And court our observation, yet are lost
Ere fancy can assign them name or shape,
Lost in the wide expanse. Ah me! how weak,
How insufficient to its own desires,
Is the poor breast which honour hath deserted!

Eth. Say, is it aught thy servant can discharge?
She wishes to relieve thy woe, and shares
Thy every pang.

Ros. Thy sympathizing heart
Hath oft consoled me, soften'd the rude hour
Of bitter recollection, and repell'd

Encroaching agony—My Henry gave thee
A servant to my use ; but thy mild nature,
So ill adapted to the lowly state
Wherein thy lot was cast, taught me to change
That servile title for the name of friend.

Eth. Give me that office now, and let me speak
Thy meanings there.

Ros. I know not what I mean.
In vain, alas ! she strives to please herself,
Who hath offended virtue. On that paper
I wished to pour my duty to my father,
Implore his dear forgiveness, beg one blessing,
Ere yet he sleep in peace—Oh, Rosamond !
Well hast thou spoke ! for in the grave alone
Can Clifford rest.—Peace and repose on earth
Thine impious offences have denied him.
Ere this, perhaps, he is laid low in dust,
And his last hours were charged with grief and shame.

Eth. Hope better, my fair mistress ; raise thy
thoughts
From the dark musings of despondent woe,
To these bright scenes of happiness and joy.

Ros. I have no title to them ; these bright scenes
May give delight to unpolluted breasts,
But not to mine ! the charmer Happiness,
Hath long deserted me ; with her loved mate,
Seraphic Innocence, she wing'd her flight,
I fear for ever.—This retired abode,
Graced with each ornament inventive Fancy
Can furnish, to allure the admiring eye,
Serves but to sting me deeper with remorse :
Upon my cheek imprint a stronger glow
Of conscious shame, reflecting on the cause,
The wretched cause, that brought me to their view.

Eth. These are the dictates of deforming spleen,
That to the low dejected mind presents
False and disgustful objects. Henry's absence
Is the sad source that casts this mournful gloom

On all around : three days have now elapsed
Unmark'd by him and love ; when he arrives,
The bower, the groves, will wear a fairer aspect,
And all be dress'd in beauty and delight.

Ros. 'Tis true, I try to wear the smile of joy
In my dear conqueror's sight : nay I do wear it,
My heart acknowledges the soft delight
His presence gives. Had I not loved too well,
I had not been this wretch !—My soul dotes on him !
I live but in his looks. Why was he not
By fate ordain'd some rustic villager,
And I the mistress of a neighbouring cot,
That we had met as happy equals do,
And lived in pleasures unallay'd by guilt !

Eth. Yet to engage the dear, the tender hours,
Which royal Henry spares from public toils ;
To call that heart your own, which all agree
To love and honour ; feast upon those smiles,
Which millions sigh for—

Ros. Cease, my Ethelinda ;
Thou knowest not how thy words afflict my breast.
Think not, though fallen from innocence, my mind
Is callous to the feelings of humanity,
Of truth or justice. I reflect full oft,
Even in my happiest moments, there lives one
Who has a right to Henry's every hour ;
Each tender vow, and each attractive smile :
I know it, and condemn my feeble heart,
For yielding to desires all moral laws
Forbid, and inborn reason disapproves.

Eth. You school yourself too harshly.

Ros. Oh, not so !

I have much more to bear. I have not yet
Learn'd the great duty expiation claims :
To part, my Ethelinda.

Eth. Part ! from whom ?

Ros. From Henry—from the monarch of my heart,

My wishes' lord, my all of earthly bliss !
Thou marvel'st at my words—but it must be ;
It is the sole atonement I can make
To a fond father's woes, his injured fame,
The tarnish'd glories of a noble line,
The royal Eleanor's insulted rights,
And my own conscious, self-arraigning heart.

Eth. Oh ! do not flatter that fond heart with hope
Of such exertive power ! beneath the trial,
Your strength would fail, your resolution droop ;
You could not yield him up.

Ros. By my warm hopes
Of mild remission to my great offences,
I feel my bosom equal to the task,
Hard as it is ; so Henry left me not
In anger or unkindness, but resign'd me,
With the dear care of a protecting friend,
To the soft paths of penitence and peace,
I would embrace the torment it entail'd,
And bless him for each pang.

Eth. Behold, he comes !

[*Exit.*

Enter the King.

King. My Rosamond ! my ever-new delight !
Receive me to thy arms, enfold me there,
Where ever blooming sweets perpetual rise,
And lull my cares to rest.

Ros. It was not thus
My Henry used to visit this retreat ;
Bright cheerfulness was wont to dance around him,
Complacent sweetness sat upon his brow,
And soft content beam'd lovely from his eye.

King. Well thou reprovest me ; I will strive to
chace
The gloomy cloud, that overhangs my spirit,
The effect of public business, public cares.
My tell-tale looks, I fear, will speak the pain

My heart still suffers, from that stranger's converse.
[*Aside.*

Oft do I mourn the duties of my station,
That call my thoughts to them, and claim the hours,
Which I would dedicate to love and thee.

Ros. I meant not to reproach thee : 'twas my zeal,
For the dear quiet of thy mind, that spoke.
I cannot see the slightest shade of grief
Dim the bright lustre of thy cheering eye,
But apprehension pains me, lest for me
Thy glory be diminish'd to the world.

King. I seek not empty popular acclaims ;
Thy tender accents falling on mine ear,
Like rural warblings on the panting breeze,
Convey more rapture, more supreme delight,
Than io-pæans of a shouting world.

Ros. To see bright satisfaction glow within
Thy manly cheek, behold the rising smile,
And hear thee speak the gladness of thy heart,
Is my best joy, my triumph, and my pride ;
And yet, my Henry, ought it to be so ?
Still should I listen to the syren Pleasure,
While awful Virtue lifts her sober voice,
And warns my heart of her neglected precepts ?

King. Forbear, forbear these soft complaints, and
speak
Of rapture ; speak of my improving ardour,
And thy unceasing love.

Ros. Oh ! thou divinest not
How many heavy hours and sleepless nights
Thy Rose endures ! how much my faulty state
(Bless'd as I am in thee) arraigns my mind ;
Oft in the bitter hours, when thou art absent,
My father's image rises to my view,
Array'd in gloomy grief and stern reproof.
Nay, do not eye me with that melting fondness ;
Hast thou not often bade me cast my cares
On thee, and told me thou wou'd'st bear them for me ?

Hear then, oh, hear me ! for to whom but thee
Can I unload my heart ?

King. Oh, speak not thus.

Shou'd these sad accents stain the precious moments,
When Henry flies from a tumultuous world
To tranquil joys, to happiness and thee ?
What busy fiend, invidious to our loves,
Torments thy gentle breast ?

Ros. Trust me, my Henry,
This is no sudden gust of wayward temper,
'Tis Reason's impulse ; oft hath my heart endured
Afflictive pangs, when my unclouded face
Hath worn a forced and temporary smile,
Because I would not hurt thy noble mind.
Advancing time but multiplies my torments,
And gives them double strength ; they will have vent.
Oh ! my protector, make one glorious effort
Worthy thyself—remove me from thy arms ;
Yield me to solitude's repentant shade.

King. Renounce thee, did'st thou say, my Rosa-
mond ?

Were those the words of her and love ?

Ros. They were ;

It is my love entreats ; that love which owns
Thee for its first, its last, its only lord.

Allow me to indulge it, undisturb'd

By the sore miseries which now surround me,
Without the sense of guilt, that fiend who waits
On all my actions, on my every thought.

King. By Heaven, I never knew distress till now !
Thy accents cleave my soul ; thou dost not know
What complicated agonies and pangs
Thy cruelty prepares for Henry's heart !
He must endure a throe, like that which rends
The seated earth, ere he can summon strength
To banish thee for ever from his arms.

Ros. Think,—conscience, honour, plead.

King. Down, busy fiend ; *[Aside.*

That stranger's tale, and Clifford's crying wrongs,
Distract my tortured mind—in pity cease—
[To Ros.

I cannot part with thee.

Ros. A thousand motives
Urge thy compliance—Will not public claims
Soon call thee from thy realm? When thou art gone,
Who shall protect me? Who shall then provide
A safe asylum for thy Rosamond,
To guard her weakness from assailing fears
And threatening dangers?

King. What can here alarm thee?

Ros. Perpetual apprehensions rise; perchance
The poignant sense, how much my crimes deserve,
Adds to the phantoms; conscience-stung, I dread
I know not what of ill. Remove me hence,
My dearest lord; thus on my knees I sue,
And my last breath shall bless thee. Give me misery,
But rescue me from guilt.

King. What, lead thee forth
From these once happy walls! yield thee, abandon'd,
To an un pitying, unprotecting world!
Then turn, and roam uncomfortably round
The changed abode, explore in vain the bliss
It once afforded, like a restless sprite
That hourly haunts the desolated spot
Where all his treasure lay! Bid me tear out
This seated heart, and rend each vital string,
I sooner could obey thee.

Ros. Turn, my Henry;
Leave me not thus in sorrow! Canst thou part
In anger from me?

King. Anger!—Oh, thou sweet one!
Witness these pangs!—I cannot, will not lose thee—
[Going.

Ros. Confirm my pardon then; pitying, reflect
'Tis the first hour I e'er beheld thy frown.
Forgive me—Oh, forgive me!

King. Spare me—spare
 A moment's thought to my distracted soul,
 To ease the throbs, and hush the swelling tumults,
 Which my fond love would fain conceal from thee,
 Thou exquisite tormentor ! *(Exit.)*

Ros. Heaven sooth thy suffering mind, restore thy
 peace,
 And win thy yielding spirit to my prayer !
 For it must be—the blow must be endured,
 Though Nature tremble at it—Heaven requires it :
 I hear the secret voice, that claims aloud
 Atonement for its violated laws.
 When I am sunder'd from him, ne'er again
 To feast my eyes on his loved form, or share
 His converse more, it will be then no sin,
 Nor Heaven nor man can be offended then,
 If sometimes I devote a pensive hour
 To dwell upon his virtues ; or, at night,
 When sleep, like a false friend, denies his comfort,
 I bathe my solitary couch with tears,
 And weary Heaven for blessings on his head.

Enter the ABBOT.

Abbot. Health to the fair, whose radiant charms
 diffuse

Bright beams around, and shame meridian day
 With rival lustre and superior beauty !

Ros. Alas, good father, my dejected heart,
 Ill-suited now to Flattery's soothing breath,
 Is wrapp'd in other thoughts.

Abbot. An old man's praise
 Is of small worth ; nor shou'd'st thou term it flattery,
 The approbation which the ready tongue
 Spontaneous utters, at thy beauties' sight :
 But thy sad eyes are swoln with tears ; I trust
 They flow from holy motives.

Ros. Thou hast oft
 Preach'd, in persuasive accents, the great duty

Of combating temptation ; teaching Virtue
To gain dominion o'er assailing passions,
And with her pious firmness guard the breast.

Abbot. I have, fair daughter.

Ros. These thy holy precepts,
My melancholy heart, I hope, hath learn'd ;
The self-convicted mourner hath resolved
To turn from guilt's delusive dangerous way,
And seek the penitential paths of peace.

Abbot. Explain thyself, my pupil ; lay thy meanings
Clear to my view.

Ros. I have resolved to leave
This culprit-state of unchaste, lawless love,
And, in some solitude's protecting shade,
Atone, by future purity of life,
My errors past.

Abbot. 'Tis nobly purposed, daughter ;
Worthy the precepts I have given thy youth,
And the great efforts of exalted virtue :
But why retire to moping solitude ?
The heart is weak that finds itself unable,
In any situation, to repent
Its past misdeeds ; it is the principle,
And not the place, atones ; we may be good,
And yet abide in active, cheerful life ;
There are a thousand pleasures and delights
Not inconsistent with the strictest truth
And sanctity of mind.

Ros. It may be so,
And such may be indulged, by those whose lives
Have ne'er been branded with a flagrant crime ;
But wretches like myself, whom conscience taxes
With violated chastity and justice,
Have forfeited those rights.

Abbot. I like not this—
She dares debate—she judges for herself—
I must restrain this freedom—'tis presumption.

(*Aside.*

Ros. Yes, all shall be renounced, all that conspired
To make my guilty situation wear
The face of bliss ; splendour and affluence,
All shall be given up, and well exchanged,
If they obtain remission for my crimes.

Abbot. Some farther meaning lurks beneath these
words,

Which my foreboding fears dislike. (*Aside.*

Ros. My Henry
I have solicited to this great purpose,
Of my new-open'd, new enkindled mind.

Abbot. As I divined—destruction to my views !
(*Aside.*

Ros. Why turn'st thou from me ? Breathe thy pious
comforts
To nourish my resolves.

Abbot. Think'st thou, fond pupil,
Thy paramour will yield to thy request ?
Oh no ! his passion is too much his master.
Think'st thou, can he, who dotes upon thy beauties,
Dotes even to folly—

Ros. Spare me, holy father—
Wound not my ear with one contemptuous word
Against his dignity : I cannot bear it.

Abbot. My recollection, zealous for thy ease,
Recalls the casual word. I grieve to see thee
Misled by phantoms : but there is a way,
A clear and certain way to happiness,
Which thou hast not descry'd.

Ros. Inform me, father,
How I may compass the religious ends
My state demands, and my whole soul aspires to,
Without disquieting my Henry's peace,
And I will bless thee for it.

Abbot. Love alone
Confers true honour on the marriage-state.
Without this sanction of united hearts,
The sacred bond of wedlock is defiled,

And all its holy purposes o'erthrown.

Ros. Be plain, good father.

Abbot. Happiness should crown

The altar's rites—and Henry sure deserves

To be supremely happy—thou alone

Canst make him so. Need I say more?

Ros. Speak on.

Clear, unambiguous phrases best befit

My simple sense.

Abbot. His union with the queen

Cannot be term'd a marriage; Heaven disdains

The prostituted bond, where hourly jars

Pervert the bless'd intent; thy vain retirement—

What boots it Eleanor? who now retains

The name alone of queen; or what avails

The title of a wife? Thou art the espoused

Of his affections; let the church then shed

Her holy sanction on your plighted loves;

A pious duty calls, assert thy claim,

Let thy fond lord divorce her from her state,

And Rosamond shall mount the vacant throne.

Ros. Thy specious arguments delude me not;

My soul revolts against them. Hence! I scorn

Thy further speech—Have I not crimes enough?

Have I not amply injured Henry's wife,

But I must further swell the guilty sum?

Fly with thy wicked, thy pernicious schemes,

To breasts whence every trace of good is banish'd.

I am not yet so vile; 'twas Henry's self

I loved, not England's king; not for the wealth

Of worlds, for all that grandeur can afford,

The pride of dignity, the pomp of power,

Nor even to fix my Henry mine alone,

Will I advance one added step in sin,

Or plant another torment in her breast,

Whom too severely I have wrong'd already. (*Exit.*)

Abbot. Bane to this coward heart, that shrunk
beneath

The peevish outrage of a frantic girl !
The vain presumer sorely shall repent
Her bold licentious pride, that dared oppose
Her upstart insolence 'gainst my controul,
Whose bidding shou'd direct her every thought.
Had she obey'd, the doting king perchance
Had raised the painted moppet to his throne,
And by that deed, had lost his people's love:
A ready victim to the daring bands
That threaten him around. That hope is lost—
New schemes must be devised—all arts employ'd;
For nothing shall appease my fierce resentment,
Till the foul wounds given to our mitred saint
Be deep avenged in Henry's impious heart. (*Exit.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

The Palace.

The ABBOT alone.

It shall be so—the queen herself shall be
My instrument of vengeance, both on Henry,
And that audacious minion, who presumed
To disobey my dictates. This new project

Cannot deceive my hopes : The haughty Eleanor,
Fired by those demons, Jealousy and Anger,
Will set no bounds to her outrageous will,
And she hath suffer'd wrongs that might inflame
A colder breast. But why recoils my heart
At thought of harm to this presumptuous wanton ?
Why feel reluctant strugglings, as if Virtue
Check'd and condemned my purpose ? 'Tis not harm,
'Tis piety, 'tis mercy.—Will she not
Be taken from a life of sin and shame,
And placed where she at leisure may repent
Her great offences ? This is giving her
Her soul's desire.—But Eleanor, not I,
Shall be the means. Night gathers round apace :
Ascend, thick gloom, and with thy sable wings
Veil Henry's peace for ever from his eyes !

Enter the QUEEN.

Hail, honoured queen !

Queen. Art thou a comforter ?
Thine order calls thee such ; but thou approachest
Unlike the messenger of gladsome tidings ;
Delay is in thy step, and disappointment
Sits on thy brow.

Abbot. Oh, skilful in the lines,
Which the mind pictures on th' obedient visage,
To speak her inward workings !

Queen. Thy designs
Have failed ?

Abbot. To thee I yield the palm of wisdom,
Effective policy, and deep contrivance ;
To thee resign it all.

Queen. Lose not the moments
In vain lamentings o'er mischances past :
One project foil'd, another should be try'd,
And former disappointments brace the mind
For future efforts and sublimer darings.

Abbot. Thy noble spirit may perchance succeed

Where all my arts have fail'd. I boast no power
O'er this perverse, this self-directed wanton ;
She seems new-framed—her gentle disposition,
Which erst was passive to Instruction's breath,
As vernal buds to zephyr's soothing gale,
Is banished from her breast ; imperious tones
Exalt her voice, and passion warms her cheek.

Queen. Whence can it spring, this new presumptuous change ?

Can she assume the port of arrogance ?
She whose soft looks and hypocritic meekness
Have won admiring eyes and pitying tongues,
While I am tax'd with warm and wayward temper,
For that I have not meanness to conceal
A just resentment for atrocious wrongs,
But bid them glow within my crimson cheek,
And flash indignant from my threatening eye.

Abbot. The lures of greatness, and ambition's baits,
Are eagerly pursued by soaring minds :
When first their splendour is display'd before them,
Anticipating hope exalts their brightness,
And fires the wretched gazer, ev'n to frenzy.

Queen. What hope—what greatness—what ambition ? Speak,
Explain thy meaning, ease the gathering tumult
That struggles here, and choaks me with its fulness.

Abbot. I fear to speak.

Queen. Why fear ? Look on me well ;
I am a woman with a hero's heart.
Be quick—be plain—thou hast no tale t' unfold,
Can make me shudder, though it make me feel.

Abbot. Her wild imagination hurries her
Beyond belief, or ev'n conception's limit ;
Safely protected by the royal favour
Of her great master (may I say his love ?)—

Queen. On with thy speech—dispatch !

Abbot. She threats defiance
To every other power, and all controul ;

Bids me, with haughty phrase, no more assume
The right to check her deeds ; exalts herself
Above the peers and worthies of the realm :
Nay, frantic in her fancied excellence,
Becomes the rival in imperial rule,
And plumes herself on future majesty.

Queen. The trait'ress ! but thou err'st, it cannot be :
Thou hast mista'en her words ; her coward heart
Cou'd not conceive such insolence of speech,
Such arrogant presuming.

Abbot. In effect

All was express'd, though not in open terms :
Hearts so determin'd rarely speak their meaning,
Lest just prevention intercept their purpose :
But thus much, in the fulness of her passion,
Fell from her lips : Let her a while enjoy
(These were her words) her transitory greatness !
Anon the beam may take a different poise ;
The mistress may become the exalted wife,
The haughty wife become the abandon'd mistress.

Queen. Breathed she those daring, those audacious
accents,

And doth the wretch survive it ? Be it so !
She only lives to gratify my vengeance.
Ere the vain dreamer mount her airy throne,
She shall be taught the power of royalty
O'er her own littleness, her pigmy pride.

Abbot. You do not mean to see her ?

Queen. Yes—I do—

She thirsts for honour ; I will shew it her ;
Will deign to set before her shrinking view
Majestic Eleanor, the exalted wife,
And with a glance destroy her.

Abbot. All you seek

May be obtain'd by this great condescension ;
Within your power, beneath your eye abashed,
Whelm'd with her crimes, and shrinking in her fears,
She'll crouch to any terms ; bind her by oath

No more to see your lord ; or, if you doubt
The efficacy of that tie, remove her
From the gay bower her infamy hath stain'd.
Perform a holy work ; force her to quit
The wanton course of her abandon'd life,
And in some dim, secure retreat, where you
Alone command, conceal the sorceress
For ever from the godlike Henry's eyes.

Queen. Oh, precious doctrine ! learned comforter !
Continue thus to counsel ; leave my heart,
My dauntless heart, to execute thy schemes.

Abbot. When mean you—

Queen. Now ; this night—my eager fury
Brooks no delay—thou must advise the hour.

Abbot. About the season when imperial Henry
Speeds to his midnight penance at the convent ;
I will with nicest caution watch the moments—

Queen. And be my guide ?

Abbot. Devoted to your bidding.

Queen. But soft—the means of our access—did not
This grand apostate to his nuptial bond
Contrive some childish toy, some subtle clue,
Without whose aid Inquiry's foot in vain
Attempts to find the wanton's close retreat ?

Abbot. He did ; but that device is only practised,
When public duties call him from his realm ;
Then is the minion deep immured within
The very heart of the obscure recess ;
But now that he with frequent eye o'erlooks
And watches his caged turtle, she enjoys
Free range of the whole bower, by few attended,
And none but who submissive yield obedience
To our grave habit and religious order.

Queen. Enough ; use wary watch—and hie with
speed
To my impatient soul. (*Exit Abbot.*)
Conceal her ! yes,
In that deep cavern, that eternal gloom,

Where all her shames may be conceal'd—in death;
Atonement less than this were insufficient
To gratify my boundless thirst of vengeance.
Long have they revell'd in the mighty pangs
That rent my heart—'tis now my turn to triumph.
When I behold the traitor sunk in grief,
Plaining to her whose bosom will be cold
To his distress, superior will I rise,
Proudly exult in his severest pangs,
Point at her lifeless corse, for whom he scorn'd me,
And loud exclaim in his afflicted ear,
Behold the victim of despair and love ! (Exit.

SCENE II.

An Apartment in the Bower.

Enter ROSAMOND with a letter, and ETHELINDA.

Ros. No, Ethelinda—Never from that hour,
That fatal hour, when first I saw my hero,
Saw him returning from the field of war,
In manly beauty, flush'd with glorious conquest,
Till our last grievous interview, did Henry
Shew word or look ungentle—Nay, even now,
Here in the full distraction of his soul,
O'er his strong woes soft tenderness prevails,
And all the fondness of unbounded love.

Eth. But what does he resolve ?

Ros. There, Ethelinda,
He gives me fresh disquiet; frenzy seems
To guide his wayward pen; he talks of life
As of a load he wishes to lay down,

If I persist in my unnatural purpose,
For such he terms it. Canst thou think, my Henry,
I suffer not affliction great as thine ?

Yes, let the present tumults in my breast
Be witness how I struggle with affection,
Stand up, and war with nature's strongest power,
In duty and religion's righteous cause.

Eth. And must your gentleness abide such trials,
Such hard extremity of wretchedness ?
Is here no middle course to steer ?

Ros. Forbear !

Seek not to tempt me from that proper sense
Of my deep faults, which only can sustain me
In this sore trial : to remit my fervour
Were to be lost again.

Eth. He'll ne'er consent
To yield you up, resign you to your woe,
Unfriended, unsustain'd, to heave alone
The bitter sigh and pour the unpitied tear.

Ros. He says he will return to me, and soon ;
Then paints the anguish of his bleeding heart
In unconnected phrase and broken periods ;
Adjures me, by our loves, no more to urge
The hard request on which his life depends.
Oh, did I ever think I could refuse

What Henry ask'd—But this—It must not be—
Lend me thy arm, my friend ; a sudden faintness
Comes o'er me, and instinctive bodings whisper
I shall not long survive my Henry's loss.

Eth. Oh, chide them from you ! at the sad idea
My sorrows stream afresh.

Ros. Weep not for that,
'Tis my best comfort. In the grave alone
Can I find true repose, that quiet haven,
Whereto the wretched voyager in life,
Whose little helpless bark long time hath strove
'Gainst the rude beatings of tumultuous guilt,

Oft casts an ardent look, an eager wish,
To gain a shelter there from future storms.

Eth. Let me conduct thee to the cheering breeze,
Thy looks are pale.

Ros. Oh thou, that art all mercy, (*Kneels.*
Look down, indulgent, on the child of frailty;
With pity view her errors, and instruct her
How to obtain returning peace and pardon. (*Going.*

Enter CLIFFORD in his disguise.

Clif. Stay thee, fair mourner; wherefore dost thou
shun

The messenger of comfort?

Ros. Ethelinda!

What voice was that? My startled fancy wakes
New terrors! Yet it cannot be—

Clif. My daughter!

Ros. All-gracious heaven! 'tis he—— (*Faints.*

Clif. Oh, let me clasp her

To a fond father's aged breast, and call
Her sinking spirit from the shades of death.

Eth. Oh, reverend stranger, if thou be'st her
father,

With gentle voice allure her; do not cast
The frown of anger on her meek distress;
Her softness cannot bear it.

Clif. Fear not, virgin!

Assist to raise her—the returning blood
Faintly renews its course! her timid eye
Speaks painful apprehension.

Ros. Where is fled
That reverend form? Even now it hover'd o'er me,
Sent by kind Heaven, the sacred delegate
Of comfort and protection.

Clif. Rosamond!—

Nay! turn not from me—do not shun my sight,
In pity shrink not from a father's eye,

Who comes to chace thy sorrows; comes to shed
Some pious drops o'er thy afflicted heart,
Ere he is mingled with the dust.

Ros. Thus lowly
Bent to the earth, with abject eye, that dares not
Look up to that much-injured reverend face,
Let me implore thy pardon.

Clif. Rise, my child,
Oh rise, and let me gaze on that loved form,
Which once was all my comfort.

Ros. But which now
You look upon with anger and disgust.
My crimes deserve it all.

Clif. Nay, meet my eye—
Survey me well: dost thou behold therein
A rigid judge? Oh no, the father melts
In these fast-streaming tears.

Ros. Has pitying Heaven
Heard the sad prayer of such a guilty wretch,
And granted, in the moment of affliction,
A parent's presence, and returning blessing;
To his repentant child!

Clif. Dost thou repent?—
And didst thou wish once more to see thy father?
Dry up thy tears, and answer me with firmness,
Dost thou repent?—Hast thou the fortitude
To break the fatal tie, that link'd thy soul
To lawless love, and all its false allurements?
Canst thou look up, with steady resolution,
To that great Power who loves repentant hearts,
And say thou wilt no more transgress?

Ros. I can,
I can, my father; that all-seeing Power,
To whom thou hast appeal'd, can witness for me,
I have renounced the paths of sin and shame,
And mean to spend my sad remains of life
In deep contrition for my past offences.

Clif. To find thee thus is rapture to my soul !
Enter my breast, and take again possession
Of all the fondness that I ever bore thee.—
By my best hopes, when in thy smiling youth
Mine eye hath hung enamour'd on thy charms,
Thou shew'd'st not then so lovely as now,
Dress'd in these graceful penitential tears.

Ros. Oh, my father !
And may I still look up to thee with hope
That the dear love and tenderness thy breast
Once cherish'd for thy darling Rosamond
Is not extinguish'd quite ?

Clif. Alas, my child !
I am not lost to nature and her ties,
We all are frail ; preach stoicks how they will,
'Tis not a parent's duty to cast off,
But to reclaim, the wand'rer of his blood.—
One question more, on that depends my peace.—
Shall I behold my child redeem'd from shame,
Or must I sink with sorrow to the grave,
Ere this great business of my soul's accomplish'd ?

Ros. Command my heart ; can I, thus lost to goodness,
Assuage thy cares, and soften the decline
Of weary nature ? say, my dearest father,
And by the zeal of my obedience, prove
The truth of my contrition.

Clif. Hear me then,
Thou darling of my bosom !—Westward hence,
On the slow rising of a fertile hill,
A virtuous dame of honourable race
Hath founded and endow'd a hallow'd mansion,
To pure devotion's purposes assign'd.
No sound disturbs the quiet of the place,
Save of the bleating flocks and lowing herds,
And the meek murmurs of the trilling stream,
That flows sweet-winding through the vale beneath ;

No objects intercept the gazer's eye,
But the neat cots of neighb'ring villagers,
Whose lowly roofs afford a pleasing scene
Of modest resignation and content.
There Piety, enamour'd of the spot,
Resides; there she inspires her holy fervour,
Mild, not austere; such piety, as looks
With soft compassion upon human frailty,
And soothes the pilgrim-sinner to embrace
Repentant Peace beneath her holy roof.—
Say, wilt thou quit, for such serene delights,
This gay abode of shame?

Ros. I will, my father;
My wish invites to such a soft retreat.
Oh, lead me forth!

Clif. Thy words give added strength
To my weak frame, and warm my languid blood.
Some two hours hence, when midnight veils the
globe,
Disguised, as now, in this religious garb,
Again expect me, to redeem thee hence,
And guide thy steps to that abode of bliss—
Here break we off—

Ros. Once more thy blessing on me,
While I pour forth the silent gratitude
Of my full soul for thy returning love. [*Kneeling.*

Clif. Warm as thy soul can wish, my child, re-
ceive it. [*Embracing her.*

Oh, the supreme delight 'twill be to see thee
Restored to holy peace and soft content,
And sometimes share thy converse; then devote
My lonely intervals to ceaseless prayer,
That Heaven will pour on thy repentant heart
Its healing mercy and its promised grace! [*Exit.*

Ros. Propitious Power, who cheer'st thy mourn-
er's spirit,
Accept my boundless thanks—thy pitying goodness
Inspired my father's heart, and sent him hither

To succour and sustain me. Oh, continue
Thy strength'ning fervour, that I may not shrink
From the great task I have begun, but rise
An object worthy thy returning grace !

Eth. My gentle mistress, I partake your transport,
Yet apprehension checks the rising joy.
What agonies will pierce your Henry's heart—

Ros. Peace, on thy life ! seek not to wake again
Those thoughts which I must hush within my breast ;
The lover is forgot ; what Clifford's daughter
Leaves unperform'd Clifford himself will perfect.
That tongue, whose wholesome counsels Henry wont,
In early life, to listen and obey ;
That heart, which loved his virtues, will again
Exert its power, and win him to applaud
The minister of peace, who leads me hence
To that asylum my offences claim. *(Exeunt.)*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

The Bower. Table with Tapers, &c.

Enter ROSAMOND and ETHELINDA.

Ros. Is it the vain suggestion of my fears,

Or do unwonted sounds and buzzing murmurs
Ride in each breeze ?

Eth. 'Tis fancy's coinage all :
Your mind, alarm'd lest any thwart event
Should interrupt this night's important business,
Creates false terrors.

Ros. Twice within this hour
Hath it presented to my tortured sight
My father in the agonies of death,
Gasping and pale, and stretching forth his hands
To me for aid and pity.

Eth. When suspense
And expectation hold dominion o'er
The agitated bosom, these illusions
Are busy to torment us.

Ros. Angels speed him
In safety to me ! and console my Henry,
When he shall seek his Rosamond in vain
Around this once-loved bower ! When thou be-
hold'st him,

(O ! can it be a crime to leave a sigh,
One soft adieu, for him who was so dear ?)
Say, Ethelinda, that I left these walls
Not with a harden'd, but a tutor'd mind,
Not desperate, but resolved ; arm'd with that due,
That holy resolution, which becomes
My state and purpose ; and when busy memory
Recalls the sad idea of our loves,
(Too oft, alas ! I fear 'twill press my mind,)
I'll pour my fervent prayers, that bliss and honour
May crown the hero's days !

Eth. I will do all
My mistress bids ; but must I stay behind ?
Must I renounce the sweet companionship,
Her gentleness and soft humanity
Have taught me to esteem my highest bliss ?

Ros. This once obey—this night's great business
done,

I claim no duty more ; but when the storm
Shall be o'erblown, and all be calm again,
If aught of good befall my after-hours,
Thou, Ethelinda, shalt partake it with me.
Go now, collect together those dear pledges,
(The only treasure I shall carry hence,)
My Henry's letters ; my o'er-harrass'd spirits
Would sink beneath the task. [*Exit* ETHEL.
Ill-boding fears
Possess me still ; such as I oft have heard
Haunt the sick couch, Death's sable harbingers.

Enter QUEEN *with a bowl and dagger.*

Queen. Ay, there the trait'ress sits. Who could
surmise

Guilt kept abode in such an angel-form ?

Approach, thou beauteous fiend ! Well may'st thou
start,

'Tis Eleanor that calls ; she comes to wake thee
From the vain dream, which thou hast long enjoy'd,
To justice and atonement.

Ros. Shield me, powers,
From that wrong'd form ! My fears are all explain'd.

Queen. No power can shield thee now—Thy
prayers are fruitless ;

Now cry in vain to him who hath undone thee,
Who robb'd thee of thy innocence of heart,
And taught thee to be rival to a queen.

Ros. Most injured majesty, thus to the earth
I bow myself before thee ; I confess
My heinous crimes ; I sink beneath their weight :
Yet oh ! take pity on a hapless creature
Misled by fatal love, immersed in guilt,
And blinded to the evils that ensued !

Queen. And plead'st thou that in thy defence,
fond wretch,
Which loudest cries against thee ? Knew'st thou not
Who Henry was, what were his noble ties ?

How did thy passion dare aspire so high ?
Thou should'st have sought within thine own degree
Mates for thy wanton hours ; then had'st thou not
Debased a monarch in his people's eyes,
Nor waked the vengeance of an injured queen.

Ros. Alas, thou look'st on me as on a wretch
Familiar with pollution, reconciled
To harden'd guilt, and all its shameless arts ;
I am not such. Night's holy lamps can witness
What painful sighs my sad afflicted heart
Hath heaved, what streaming tears my eyes have
pour'd,
To be released from the pernicious snare
Wherein I was involved !

Queen. Those sighs and tears,
Had true contrition been their holy source,
Should have inspired thy heart to break the snare,
And set itself at freedom.

Ros. O ! 'tis true
They should ; but in my rebel breast they found
Too strong resistance ; love hath been my fault,
My bane, my ruin ;—
O let this very weakness plead my cause,
Within your royal breast ; revolve, great queen,
How you have loved, and let those tender feelings
Win you to pity me !

Queen. [*Aside.*] What witchery
Of language hangs upon this Circe's tongue ?
Why droops my resolution ? Rouse thee, Eleanor,
Remember the great cause that brought thee hither,
Nor let a harlot's sigh, or treach'rous tear,
Subdue thy fortitude.

Ros. What shall I do
To humble me yet lower in thy sight ?
What form of language shall my lips adopt
To move thy mercy ? I confess my crimes,
Confess their heinousness, and sue for pardon :
Can I do more ? Even Heaven is won by tears,
By contrite heart, and fervent supplication ;

Shall thou be harder to appease ?—O hear !
A woman's weakness claims a woman's pity.
Exert that dignity of soul that rises
Above resentment to a pleaded wrong,
And teach me how to make atonement.

Queen. Hence!

(*Aside.*

Encroaching weakness ! coward heart, abjure it—
Think on thy mighty wrongs—arm thee to meet
My words with noble firmness ! Death alone
Appeases Eleanor's insulted love.

Ros. Death, said'st thou ?—Death !—O yet—

Queen. Behold, deluder !

I will not stain me in thy blood ; this cup
Contains thy doom.

Ros. Oh ! do not bid me die,
Steep'd as I am in guilt ; closed in a convent,
Where Heaven's clear air and animating light
Ne'er found an entrance ; let me be condemn'd
To all the hardships ever yet devised ;
Or banish me to roam far-distant realms,
Unfriendly climates, and unsocial wastes,
So thou afford me some remaining hours
To reconcile my soul to that great summons,
When Heaven shall deign to call.

Queen. Profane no more
The name of Heaven with thy polluted breath,
Thou who hast spurn'd its laws ! Justice demands
Thy forfeit life. Thou shalt no more mislead
A monarch's noble mind ; no more devise
Insidious art, to work a queen's disgrace :
Thou shalt not live to rob her of her rights,
Her lord's affection, and imperial pride,
That thou may'st seize the abdicated seat,
And triumph in her fall.

Ros. By Heaven's pure grace,
My mind ne'er harbour'd such an impious thought !

Queen. Heap not fresh crimes, thou hast enough
already.

Ros. Have I no evidence on this side heaven?
And must I fall alone, unjustified?

Where is the holy abbot? Where my Henry?

Queen. Thy Henry! thine!—That word hath fired
anew

My failing spirit. Drink!

Ros. Yet, yet relent——

Queen. Drink! or this poniard searches every vein.

Ros. Is there no pity? None—This awful silence
Hath answer'd me, and I entreat no more.

Some greater power than thine demands my life;

Fate summons me; I hear, and I obey—

O, Heaven! if crimes like mine may hope forgiveness,
Accept a contrite heart! (*Drinks.*)

Queen. O, beauteous witch!

Hadst thou been less alluring, or had I

Forgot to love, thou hadst not met this fate! (*Aside.*)

Ros. Thou art obey'd—Once more I bend before
thee—

Nay, harden not thy heart to the last accents

Of a poor wretch, that hurries to her grave.

Look, look upon me; I behold thee not

With unforgiving and resentful eyes;

I deem thee but the destined instrument

Of righteous Heaven, to punish my misdeeds.

Queen. A flood of agony o'erwhelms my soul,
And all my pride and rage is wash'd away. (*Aside.*)

Ros. Now cast an eye of pity on my tears,
Now, in these awful, these tremendous moments,
Thou canst not doubt my truth. By my warm hopes
Of mercy at that throne where all must bow,
My only crime was love. No power on earth
Could have impell'd me to a further wrong
Against thy state or peace.

Queen. I must believe thee—

What then remains for me? O rise, and wreak

Thy vengeance on my now-relenting rage.

Behold these tears—My wrongs are all forgot—

Excess of passion, love that knew no bounds,
Drove me, with execrable haste, to act—
What now I would resign all earthly bliss
To have undone again.

King. (*Within.*) Seize all that haunt
These winding avenues—let none escape.

Ros. Ah me! that voice!

Queen. 'Tis Henry's; let him come,
And take his share of misery.

Enter the KING, ETHELINDA, and Attendants.

King. Where, where is she?—
O fell, vindictive fiend, what horrid act
Hath thy dark rage been dealing?

Queen. Mad revenge!

Eth. Lo! the dread means! all this my mind
foretold,

When the queen's train first met my startled eye.

Ros. Ev'n now my flitting spirit is on the wing;
The deadly draught runs through my scorching blood,
I feel it at my heart—O, Henry! Henry!

King. Malicious rage, thou rid'st the lightning's
flash

To execute thy vengeance! Ethelinda,
Thy zeal was cool, thy expedition slow,
Compared to that fell tyrant's rapid heat.
Lift up thine eyes—O! do not leave me yet—
Why melts compassion in thy languid looks?
The flames of fury should be kindled there,
'Gainst him, who left thee to invading fate,
Who saw not thy distress, heard not thy cries,
When black revenge was pouring torments on thee!
cruel woman, unrelenting fiend!

Ros. Calm, calm thy mind; vent not thy fury there,
Her wrongs cried loud, and her great heart is wrapt
In sorrow for the deed.

King. What now avails it?
Compunction should have sprung when she beheld

The streaming tears course one another down
Thy beauteous cheek, and read the speechless grief
Of thy imploring eyes. O! was it thus
I thought to see my Rosamond again!—
Hath fury, like an eastern blast, destroy'd
The sweetest, loveliest flower that ever bloom'd?
But I will die beside thee; never more
Revisit cheerful day, nor dream of comfort,
When thou art parted from me.

Ros. Cease, O! cease

These useless plainings; consecrate to peace
The few remaining moments—nor let rage
Impel thy soul to meditate revenge
For a poor wretch, who justly thus atones
Her numerous crimes. O, royal Eleanor!
Hear these last accents—Howsoe'er I loved,
However guilty I have seem'd to you,
This very night I had resolved to leave
These fatal walls, and, by my father's guidance,
Devote my future days to penitence.

King. Doth not thy blood, like mine, halt in thy
veins,

And chill the seat of life?

Ros. Extend thy pity,

(I cannot wrong thee further,) grant me now
One moment to indulge the tender feelings
Of hapless love, and breathe a fond adieu,
Ere this poor harass'd spirit quit my breast.

King. Why this compassion to the wretched cause
Of all thy miseries! I am the source
Of every pang that feeds on thy loved heart—
Of this thy fatal end.—Reproach, revile me—
Do any thing but look thus kindly on me,
And I will struggle with my mighty woes,
Taught by the great example.

Ros. O, my Henry!

Let not the sad remembrance of my fate
Sit on thy heart, nor call my present state

A misery : I wish'd some sure retreat
From grief and shame, and Heaven hath heard my
prayer.

Queen. Unhappy victim of my blinded fury,
I almost envy thee thy present state ;
Thou soon wilt be at ease ; while I must liv
To all the torments which a guilty mind
Inflicts upon itself.

King. Canst thou feel thus,
Yet couldst remain obdurate to her tears
And deaf to her entreaties ?

Queen. A deed like this
Was foreign to my heart, had not the fraud
Been pour'd into my ears, that I was meant
To be divorced for ever from thine arms,
Be made an outcast from thy bed and throne,
That she might rise my substitute in all.

King. What black-soul'd dæmon could possess thy
mind
With such a hellish falsehood ?

Queen. He—that fiend !

CLIFFORD brought on, in his disguise.

King. Wretch, take thy death.

Ros. Forbear !

[*Faints.*

Clif. Strike, Henry, strike ! [*Discovers himself.*
Why start'st thou back ? I shrink not from the blow ;
New woes assail me at that sinking object,
And all thy sword can do is mercy now.

King. Thou, night, in tenfold darkness close me
round,
From that much-injured form !

Clif. My child, my child,
Oh ! wake, and let me once more hear thy voice !
Speak, speak, my Rosamond ; tell my sad heart
What further woe awaits it. Hath affliction
Robb'd me of sense ? or do I see the pangs
Of ruthless death within thy struggling eye ?

Ros. Thou dost, my father ; let me bless thy goodness

Ere speech forsake me ; thou art come to execute
Thy pious promise—Fate prevents thy care,
And I submit. My penitential tears,
My hopes of heavenly mercy, and thy pardon,
Alleviate death's sharp terrors.

Clif. O ! what hand
Hath robbed me of the latest ray of hope,
That trembling glitter'd on my eve of life ?

Queen. In me behold the murderer of thy peace !
Vent thy reproaches, load me with thy curses,
I bear them all ; high as I am in rank,
And proud in heart, I bend to make atonement.
My rage unsex'd me ; and the dire remembrance
Will ever haunt my mind.

King. It will have vent.
Lo, injured Clifford, Henry kneels before thee !
Henry, who spurn'd the holy ties of friendship,
The kindly brotherhood of human nature,
And robb'd thee of thy child ; yet let me mingle
My penitential with thy pious tears
O'er this loved form, for whom my heart weeps
blood.

Ros. Peace, peace, a moment ! let my parting
spirit
Glide gently hence ; death hurries on apace.
O ! welcome ! hide me in thy peaceful breast
From the dread horrors that surround me here.—
Confusion, shame, oppress my languid thoughts
In this dread moment.—Ye, much-injured, pour
Compassion on me now ! Thou, royal Eleanor—
Thou best of fathers—O forgive !—And thou,
Beloved Henry !—Oh !—

[Dies.]

King. Art thou then gone ?—
And did thy dying looks and words speak pardon
To thy destroyer ? In that parting sigh
The meekest, kindest spirit took its flight,

That ever held abode in human breast.
O, sorrowing Clifford ! how shall I atone
Thy bleeding injuries ?

Clif. It needs not, Henry ;
My child lies dead before me—'Tis enough—
One grave will hold us both—My failing heart
Hath but few drops of life's warm stream remaining,
Grief soon will drink them all—

King. What now can fate do more ?
Rain, eyes, rain everlasting floods of tears
O'er this sad monument of lawless love.

Queen. If thy torn heart can spare from its own
anguish

A moment's respite, hear ! Thou knewest me, Henry ;
Was cruelty an inmate of this breast,
When thou wert kind and constant ? Think what pang
I must have felt, ere wrought to this black deed ;
Let that reflection win one pitying tear
For all my sufferings, and I ask no more.

King. It shall be so ; and we will reign together
In solemn, sad, uncomfortable woe.

Queen. Henry, farewell ! the hand that's foul with
murder,
(Bear witness, Heaven !) shall ne'er be closed in
thine.

To the sad cloister and repentant prayer
I give my future life. Hail, gloomy shades !
Ye best befit the execrable wretch,
Who, daring to assume the bolts of vengeance,
Dealt desolation with unbounded fury,
And shew'd the faults, she meant to punish, slight,
Compared to her, and her atrocious crimes.

[*Exit Queen.*]

King. In this great deed thou hast out-gone thy
Henry.

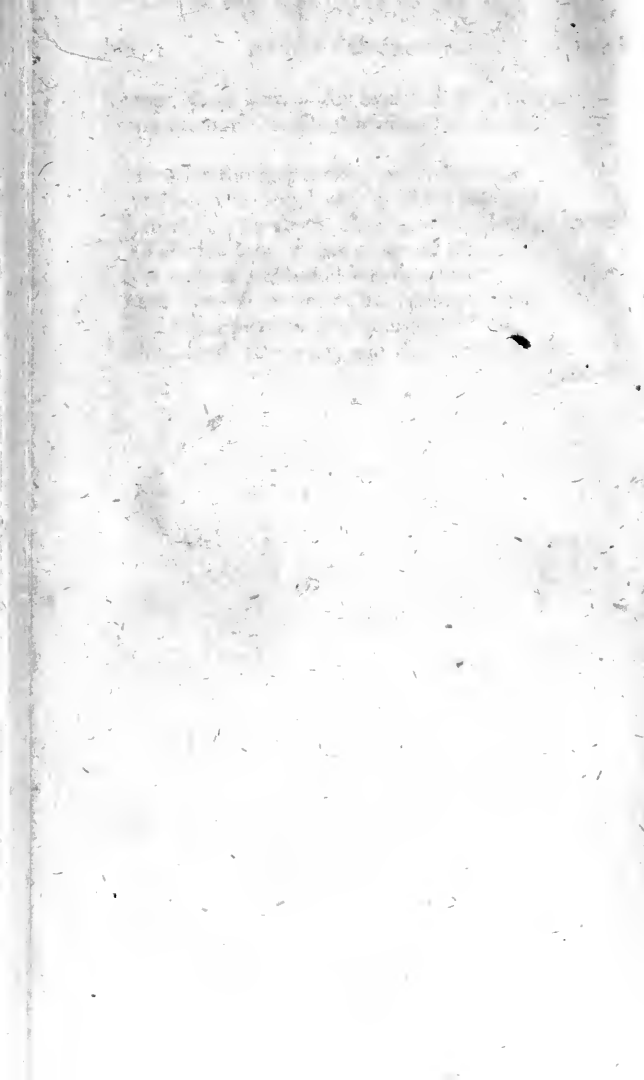
Peace, to thy troubled soul ! Ye hapless pair,

Accept these tears,—for ever will they flow,
While memory recalls this dreadful scene.

Here let the gay seducer turn his eyes,
And see the dread effects of lawless love:
Learn, 'tis no single crime,—the mischief spreads
To all the dearest ties of social life.
Not only the deluded virgin's heart
Falls the sad victim of his trait'rous art,
But oft, a prey to one licentious deed,
The friend, the lover, and the parent bleed.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF VOLUME NINTH.





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